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An Enslaved Landscape: The Virginia Plantation at the End of the Seventeenth Century

David Arthur Brown

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**An Enslaved Landscape:
The Virginia Plantation at the End of the Seventeenth Century**

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**A Dissertation presented to the Graduate Faculty
of the College of William and Mary in Candidacy for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

Lyon G. Tyler Department of History

**The College of William and Mary
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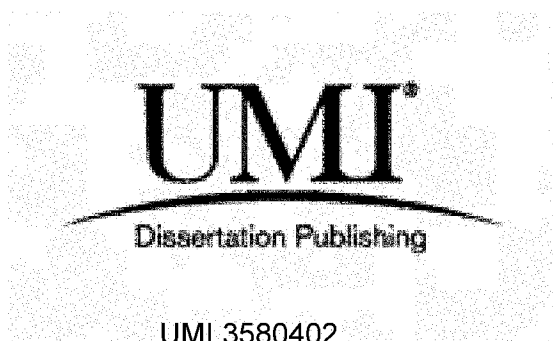
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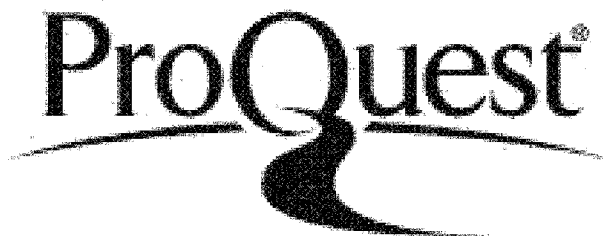


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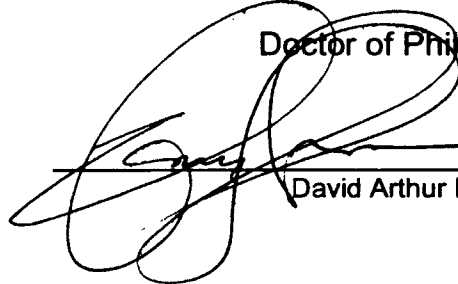


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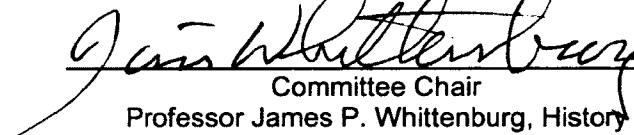
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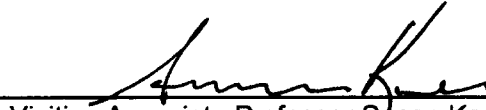


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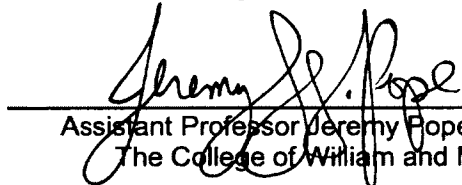
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ABSTRACT

Lewis Burwell II designed Fairfield plantation in Gloucester County to be the most sophisticated and successful architectural and agricultural effort in late seventeenth-century Virginia. He envisioned a physical framework with the intent to control the world around him so that he might profit from growing tobacco, while raising his family's status to the highest in the colony through the display of wealth and knowledge and the enslavement of both Africans and the natural surroundings. The landscape he envisioned contrasted with those of the enslaved Africans he purchased and put to work in the fields and buildings surrounding his 1694 brick manor house. These overlapping and often competing landscapes are visible in the surviving material culture, archaeological remains, and historic documents. Individuals created these landscapes from their personal experiences, a product of their constantly changing perspectives extending outward from themselves, their "way of seeing" tempered by a culture rooted in Senegambia, England, or Virginia. At a crucial period in Virginia history, perhaps the most significant period of plantation development prior to the Civil War, Lewis Burwell II's Fairfield plantation reflected the struggle between the co-dependent strains of agricultural expansion and racialized slavery. This dissertation attempts to explain how and why individuals created and manipulated these landscapes, how landscapes provided opportunities and constrained possibilities, defined interpersonal relationships, individual and group identities, and the relative success and failures of a society constantly confronted with a physical environment it could not wholly control. By studying past landscapes and how others used them to define and redefine their identities, it is possible to gain insight into our present condition, deepening an understanding of how our interactions with landscape define our own identity.

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When I started writing this dissertation I wanted to avoid the statement that authors frequently make in their acknowledgements, specifically that "this would not have been possible without the contributions of many people, too numerous to list." I wanted to acknowledge every contributor, from the seemingly random question offered up by an avocational archaeologist at a presentation to the Nansemond Chapter of the Archeological Society of Virginia, to the detailed comments received on chapter drafts reviewed by a handful of long-time supporters and friends (Anna, Tonia, and Nadia - thank you!). But the enthusiasm that often comes with wanting to do things better or more completely than your predecessors is now tempered with the reality of their (and now my) experiences. After taking a decade to write the more than 300 pages that follow, it would be best to avoid writing an additional 300 pages acknowledging the many wonderful people that helped this dream become a reality.

This dissertation is the product of spaces, places, things, and people. This is a product of my fascination with that first broken tea cup in 1981, found beneath the stairs of a three-room shack behind my parent's house at 42 Lodge Road in Poquoson, Virginia. It was that moment of discovery, finding a handful of fragments that mended together and, with mom's encouragement, going back outside with the dirt still fresh beneath my fingernails to find more. These were intoxicating feelings. I can also credit watching *Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Ark*, with dad's encouragement, and reading about Thomas Jefferson and his excavation of an Indian mound, the latter being the first book I can remember reading all the way through. These two men served as role models for a shy kid interested in the story behind these things I found in the ground. Just as important, though, was the chip on my shoulder that came from being made fun of at "show and tell" in elementary school. Yes, I was "that kid" who brought in a broken tea cup and thought it was cool. That day convinced me that I had found a purpose and it was worthwhile, no matter what anyone else thought.

Perhaps most important of all, this dissertation is the result of a childhood filled with watching people. As a kid, my father would bring me and my sister to the shopping mall where we would spend hours watching people, discussing how they interacted, where they were going, and why they were there. They existed within space, they moved from place to place, their worlds briefly intersecting with one another. An incalculable array of personal histories, each left their mark, however small, on this landscape as they traveled from the food court to the movie theater or the department store to the parking lot. And they left their mark on me. To this day I enjoy those quiet moments with the near infinite potential personal scenarios play out in front of me while I sit back and watch them unfold.

Circumstance led me to write each chapter of this dissertation in a different location. I rewrote the prospectus and much of the first chapter at the residence of John and Megan Miller in Farmville. I credit John with that initial push that got me moving towards completion, our discussions over beer and buffalo wings convincing me that I could finish and I had something interesting to say. I wrote Chapter 2 in the Subway restaurant in West Point, Virginia and would have written more there had the store manager not flooded the place with smell of asiago cheese bread so thoroughly that I doubt I could ever eat at a Subway ever again. George and Elizabeth Adams lent me a desk and study area at their home in Richmond, providing me with ample amounts of power bars and other snacks which kept me focused on Chapters 6 and 7. Scott and all of the kind staff of *The Daily Grind* at The College of William and Mary kept the caffeine flowing for Chapters 3 and 4 and never once asked why I had not finished yet, having seen me there as early as 2002. I wrote bits and pieces at the West Point Library, the nearby McDonalds, and at my parent's house in Gloucester Point. I even wrote a little at my desk at home in King William, Virginia. The occasional writing session even took place in a car (first my 2001 Ford Ranger, later a 2003 Volvo S60). Perhaps the most memorable experience was in our newest vehicle, a 2013 Volkswagen Sportswagon, watching my wife, Kristen, ride our horses Oscar and Rosie at the barn while I typed quietly with our son Andrew asleep in the back seat. And while I sincerely wish I would have finished this dissertation sooner, I would not trade these moments in these places with these people for anything in the world.

There are many other people who I feel indebted to for their help and support throughout this journey and I will do my best to reference them here (in no particular order). I am indebted to Anthony Smith, the first staff archaeologist of the Fairfield Foundation, whose historical research formed the foundation for the "Timeline," a now 200+ page chronologically organized summary of all primary documents referencing Fairfield Plantation, the Burwells, the Thrustons, and other families associated with this remarkable place in Gloucester County. He also made it cool to read about archaeology during lunch and discuss Russian literature while excavating a posthole. I am also indebted to fellow Burwell-o-philes Lorena Walsh and John Blair whose published works and conversations not only peaked my interest in Fairfield Plantation but whose encouragement convinced me of the value of continued research. Lorena in particular served as inspiration with her challenge: what can archaeology tell us that we can't find out by looking in the archives?

I sincerely appreciate the time and effort several of my peers spent sharing with me their experiences, including Terry Brock, Bernie Herman, Ray Cannetti, Matt Webster, John Coombs, Phil Levy, Anna Agbe-Davies Deetz, Eric Deetz, Dave Muraca, Andy Edwards, Meredith Poole, Bill Pittman, Dennis Pogue, Eleanor Breen, Esther White, Jason Whitehead, Bill Neff, Cary Carson, Willie Graham, Ed Chappell, Carl Lounsbury, Mark Wenger, and Jeff Klee. Cary and Carl in particular have proven to be a great influence on my

thinking and I look forward to many moments in the future discussing further research on Fairfield plantation and other remarkable landscapes of colonial Virginia. My fellow members of the Werowocomoco Research Group, through their friendship and careful guidance on related matters, helped more than they will ever know, including Danielle Moretti-Langholtz, Randy Turner, and Martin Gallivan. Martin in particular attended nearly every brown bag and student talk I gave despite being one of the busiest professors on campus. His perspectives on landscape and encouragement throughout the last decade will always be valued.

I am particularly grateful to Linda Rowe of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation's Department of Historical Research for her sharing with me the York County Project Master Biographical File. This remarkable collection was compiled via the York County Project, Department of Training and Historical Research, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation with assistance from the National Endowment for the Humanities under Grants RS-0033-80-1604 and RO-20869-85. It has perhaps the greatest single concentration of documents related to Gloucester County's seventeenth-century history.

I am grateful for the camaraderie of my students, interns, and fellow graduate students, in the history department and from across the sunken garden, including Laura Masur, Colleen Betti, and Nathan Miller, who each contributed images to this dissertation, and Chris Shephard, Dan Sayers, Jenn Ogborne, Shannon Mahoney, Brendan Burke, Mark Kostro, Jamie Harwood, Jason Burroughs, John Weber, Ellen Adams, Jim David, Cosby Hall, Bronwyn Fletchal, Jody Allen, Dave Corlett, Sean Harvey, Caroline Morris, Caroline Hasenyager, Jack Fiorini, Andrew Sturtevant, Sarah McClennan, and, in particular, Josh Beatty, who found the idea of a labor surplus during the late seventeenth century an intriguing possibility and well worth the beers and pub food we enjoyed discussing it. I am also grateful for the friendships built during a handful of very helpful fellowships, including those with Arthur McClendon, Teagan Schweitzer, Michelle MacDonald, Anna Marley, Jillian Galle, Fraser Neiman, Jesse Sawyer, Beth Sawyer, Leslie Cooper, Bea Arndt, Sara and Nick Bon-Harper as well as the staff of the library and archives at the Rockefeller Library at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Winterthur Museum and Gardens, the International Center for Jefferson Studies and the Digital Archaeological Archive of Comparative Slavery, and the Virginia Historical Society. In addition, I received financial support from each of these institutions as well as the Old Salem Museum and Gardens and the Filson Club in Lexington, Kentucky.

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I am forever indebted to my committee, including Jeremy Pope, Susan Kern, Audrey Horning, and my advisor in all things, James Whittenburg. Jeremy bailed me out when I needed his help the most, Audrey stuck with me no matter what, Susan served as both an academic and spiritual advisor, and Jim was the rock we all rely on whose unwavering support gives us the confidence to succeed at anything we can imagine.

I am thankful for the friendship and support of Derek Wheeler and Emilie Johnson, who each inspired me in their own ways and whose friendship will never be taken for granted. Lastly, I must acknowledge the significant sacrifice and support of my family. My mother-in-law, Linda Pagelsen, was patient beyond reason and my father-in-law and his wife, Robert Pagelsen and Joan Bevelacqua, were always supportive. My sister, Julie, knew when to ask me about my progress and when to avoid the subject (like any good sibling would) and my parents, Tim and Janet, did everything they could to help along the way short of writing the darn dissertation themselves. I owe Thane Harpole, the brother I never had, a debt of gratitude I can never repay. I think he could write a better dissertation than this one, and one day I hope he does; we would all be better for it. And most important, my wife, Kristen, who would not settle for second best, and would not let me either, insisting that I do this despite all the hardship we experienced. She deserves the greatest thanks, along with my son Andrew, as they put up with every delay, every break in confidence, and those hours, days, and weeks I disappeared to write and do research. I can never truly repay them for all they have done for me, but I will try anyways.

To Kristen
you made this possible, more than anyone...

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Introduction:

“...landscapes are about everything...they both reflect and engender ways of thinking about ourselves and of being in the world.”¹



The Fairfield Manor House c. 1890, looking southwest (left) and digital reconstruction of the north facade before (above right) and after (below right) the loss of the west wing c. 1839. Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia and The Fairfield Foundation, White Marsh, Virginia

Lewis Burwell II stood tall among the endless fields of tobacco surrounding his home. A cool wind blew across his face. Looking south, toward the mouth of Carter Creek he saw the tall ships anchored in Carter Bay, heavy with goods brought from across the Atlantic. He envisioned the profits and opportunities that might emerge from this year's crop of dark leafy plants growing up alongside him. Several months ago these oceangoing vessels transported to England dozens of his tobacco-filled hogsheads, carefully packaged to avoid rot, as his father had taught him. He imagined the lives of the merchants in London and Bristol. Reading books and

¹ Dianne Harris, "The Postmodernization of Landscape: A Critical Historiography," in *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 58 (1999), 3: 440.

hearing stories from friends recently returned from across the Atlantic, he filled his mind with images of the hustle and bustle of an affluent English city, full of excitement and potential. But his world was not theirs. His world was different. Although an intrinsic connection bound his world to that of the merchants, more than water separated the Tidewater countryside and the metropolis of England.

Lewis Burwell II (1650-1710) experienced the world around him. He felt the heat and light of the sun, the rain from the clouds, the sandy soils, and the breeze that once again blew across his face as he walked further into his fields. He understood the passage of time, the hours in the day, the tick-tick-tick of his pocket watch a more persistent reminder of the day's progression than the sun moving across the sky from east to west.² As a man raised by some of Virginia's most successful tobacco planters, he understood how each year's hopes rested on the successful harvest, shipment, and sale of this crop. This success relied on his hard work, the work of his laborers (both enslaved and indentured), and right combination of temperature, moisture, and bugs. The sale of a good harvest might allow him the profits not only to support his family, but perhaps buy more land, a few more enslaved Africans, and a fancy dress for his wife, Abigail. A sizeable profit might lead to a larger line of credit with London merchants and an elevated reputation among his peers and the tenant farmers and smaller land owners neighboring his plantation. A handful of good years might make each of these dreams a reality, add to his family's coffers and extend his legacy in this

² It is not known if Lewis Burwell II owned a pocket watch, but his contemporary and close friend, Robert Carter (1663-1732) owned a Thomas Tompion watch and others of their shared economic and social status were the first in Virginia to regularly possess and use time pieces. Subsequent members of the Burwell family, specifically Lewis Burwell II's great grandson, Lewis Burwell II (1737-1779) lost his Samuel Toulmin pocket watch (1757-1783) and advertised for its return; *Virginia Gazette* (Purdie) 24 November 1775; Graham Hood, "Time for the Royals: Tompion's Clock" in *Colonial Williamsburg Journal* 27 (2004), 2.

generation and perhaps beyond. Sadly, he saw no sign that this year's crop would better the last.

Lewis could clear another field, plant more sweet-scented tobacco, or build a second gristmill to process his grain or corn and perhaps that of his neighbors. He looked across the field at a gang of enslaved Africans methodically removed the smaller leaves from the young tobacco plants, and a few worms as well. They were a mix of slaves inherited from his mother and his wife's uncle along with others newly purchased from a trader recently arrived from Africa.³ If he had more workers, he could put more of his land under cultivation and ensure the success he so desperately desired. How much harder could he push his slaves? How could he squeeze more work, more profit, and more time out of a single day? How could he protect his crop from the occasional heavy rain, the likely period of drought, or the sudden infestation of worms? How could he build on his success, expand his plantation, and control the natural and the man-made world around him? How could he change this world into the landscape of his dreams?

³ The origins of the enslaved Africans purchased by Lewis Burwell II are not known. In Lorena Walsh's recent detailed discussion of the largely West African origins and American destinations of slaves she concludes that out of 22,432 slaves with known departure points, the greatest number imported into the York River drainage came from the Bight of Biafra (slightly more than 50%) followed by West Central Africa (about 25%), the Windward Coast/Gold Coast/Bight of Benin (about 12.5%), Senegambia/Sierra Leone (about 8%) and East Africa (4.5%). Lorena Walsh, "Migration, Society, Economy, & Settlement" in Cary Carson and Carl R. Lounsbury, eds. *The Chesapeake House: Architectural Investigation by Colonial Williamsburg* (Chapel Hill, 2013): 54.

Looking back across the field at Burwell, Yambo felt that same cool breeze.⁴

Despite the early morning hour, sweat poured off his body onto the tobacco leaves and the soil between his toes. He picked a few small leaves off the plant, looked for any worms that might be hiding beneath the larger leaves, and quickly moved to the next plant while those around him tried to keep pace. New faces dominated the group, some quieter than others, others speaking a language he only partly recognized. The overseer called out their names, some sounding similar to his name, but most sounding similar to English names, and always connected with a harsh reprimand for slow work. Time would tell how long they would last, but their numbers increased with each new season. Field work was not the easiest task, but it was predictable. All morning, all afternoon, and often into the evening, he crouched over plant after plant, shuffling from one to the next; at one time darkness provided temporary escape, but now the work day extended into dusk and sometimes beyond. The mechanical movements of squatting, picking, rising, and shuffling to the next plant, repeated much as the wheel turned on the cart.

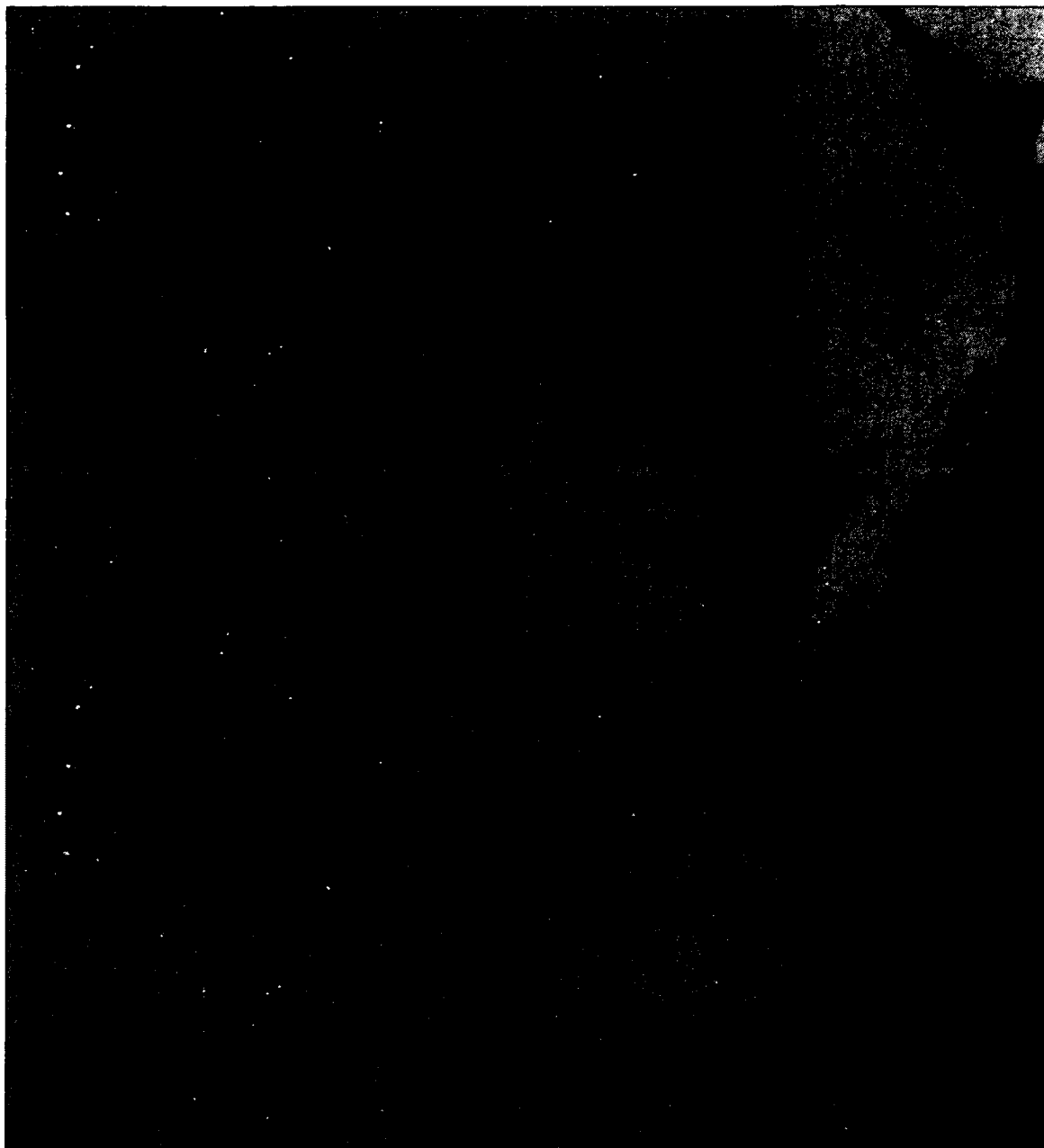
Yambo's mind wandered. The monotony of the day led him to memories of a time long since past. Images returned to his childhood a world away, the horror and

⁴ Yambo was one of a many enslaved Africans known to have been owned by Lewis Burwell II, and there are likely many more that will never be known by name. It is important to note that none from the 1670s are known by name. Purchased along with Betty, Dick, and "12 good young Cowes" from William Coman of York County for 48 pounds, 8 shillings and 2 pence and 824 pounds of Tobacco on November 11th, 1693, the sale also included "the land, houseing, orchrds, gardings fences etc. thereunto belonging...turf and twig..." York County, Deeds, Orders, and Wills (YCDOW) IX (1691-1694), 291. Philip Morgan found Yambo among the exceptions to the rule when considering names. He wrote "Among the eighty-nine Virginia slaves that Lewis Burwell owned between 1692 and 1710, the vast majority became known at least to their master by English names. Nevertheless, one in nine Burwell slaves achieved something more distinctive: at least five men retained African names." "In this way," and others he discusses, "African memories were not lost altogether." Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint, Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake & Low Country* (Chapel Hill, 1998): 21, f. 33. See also, Lorena S. Walsh, "A Place in Time' Regained: A Fuller History of Colonial Chesapeake Slavery Through Group Biography" in Larry E. Hudson, ed., *Working Toward Freedom: Slave Society and Domestic Economy in the American South* (Rochester, NY, 1994): 5.

panic of abduction, sale, and forced transport through the port city closest to his home and across an ocean, and finally the arrival in this new land. He dreamt of hearing his mother speak to him, in his language seldom heard now, her stories of the heavens above and the spirits of their ancestors. There are some who work alongside him who shared similar stories, while others told very different ones (when he could understand them). These moments in the evenings and during occasional breaks in the day reminded him of life before this all began, before he arrived in Virginia. And then a dust cloud erupted in the distance.

Breaking through the tree line along the road into the plantation, Mr. Lewis Griffin rode up on his dusty white mare, uncomfortably warm in his wool jacket and wig.⁵ Not even the cool breeze would refresh him, his thoughts focused on a more pressing matter. A short ride, only a few miles north along the Great Road, he traveled through the center of Abingdon Parish from the ferry at Gloucester Town to Burwell's plantation at Carter Creek. Walking up to Lewis Burwell near the front of the plantation's manor house, he brought word from Philip Ludwell, Burwell's stepfather. Governor Berkeley's forces vanquished those of the rebel Nathaniel Bacon, Burwell's distant cousin by marriage. Berkeley departed, Griffin explained, on a ship destined for England, the inquiries of an anxious royal house wondering how their profitable little colony lost its way. Reports confirmed the arrival of British troops and

⁵ Lewis Griffin was a business partner and likely friend of Lewis Burwell II's. Together, they served as co-executors of the heirless estate of John Burnham of Middlesex County, Virginia. Their status and partnership is confirmed by the prolonged legal battle they waged against Ralph Wormeley of Middlesex over Burnham's estate. No Author, "The Randolph Manuscript: Griffin and Burwell vs. Wormeley in the General Court of Virginia, 1681 (Part 1)," in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 18 (1910) 2: 129-139.



The Chesapeake Region.
Carson and Lounsbury, *The Chesapeake House*, 3.

a new Governor would be sent soon to reestablish royal control. While separated by an ocean and many weeks of travel, suddenly the two worlds were not so far apart.

The dust settled, Burwell and Griffin ventured inside the main house. Anne, a house slave, quickly brought them water, followed by wine and a small meal. They

discussed the recent turmoil in the colony while outside Yambo continued to pick off leaves and worms, his curiosity piqued by the excitement this visitor's arrival brought to the plantation. As the heat of the sun beat down and the hours progressed, Yambo refocused on the task at hand, his thoughts wandering more towards the evening's hunt and the hope for rabbit or squirrel or perhaps a meatier reward to cap a very long day.⁶

The land owner, the slave, and the visitor, for a brief moment, appear to share an experience. The idea of these people existing within close proximity, seeing each other, and feeling the same cool breeze and the same sandy soil, links them together. And while it may be possible that they understood these sensory experiences in similar ways, the backdrop of this moment, this "landscape," does not frame three separate parallel lives running side by side from different origins to different destinations. Rather, this landscape is a creation of, if only for a brief period, their trajectories criss-

⁶ These vignettes are historical fiction intended to begin a discussion about landscape on the Virginia tobacco plantation at the end of the seventeenth century, offering an entry for investigation of important issues of race, power, agency, culture, and identity. They are not intended to offend or present a false sense of history or to undermine the value of data driven conclusions or methodological rigor. They are inspired by a handful of late twentieth-century scholars of past cultures, including archaeologists Adrian and Mary Praetzelis, anthropologist Richard Price, and historian Garrett Mattingly, and the recent work of archaeologist Patricia Samford. It is a reaction to scholars' concerns with multivocality; it also reflects my desire to open dialogues with general audiences and scholars. See Adrian Praetzelis and Mary Praetzelis, "Archaeologists as Storytellers" in *Historical Archaeology* 32 (1998), Richard Price, *Alabi's World* (Baltimore, 1990), Garrett Mattingly, *The Armada* (Boston, 1959), Patricia Samford, *Subfloor Pits and the Archaeology of Slavery in Colonial Virginia* (Tuscaloosa, 2007): 199-200, and James Deetz, "Discussion: Archaeologists as Storytellers" in *Historical Archaeology* 32 (1998), 1: 94-96. For additional discussion of recent scholarship on multivocality and dialogue in archaeological writing and scholarship, see Ian Hodder, "Writing Archaeology" in *Antiquity* 63 (1989): 268-274, Rosemary A. Joyce with Robert W. Preucel, Jeanne Lopiparo, Carolyn Guyer, and Michael Joyce, *The Languages of Archaeology: Dialogue, Narrative, and Writing* (Oxford, 2002), and Ann Stahl, Rob Mann, and Diana DiPaolo Loren, "Writing for Many: Interdisciplinary Communication, Constructionism, and the Practices of Writing" in *Historical Archaeology* 38 (2004), 2: 83-102.

crossing or narrowly missing one another before they head off in unpredictable directions.

Landscape is an individual creation, one person's constantly changing perspective extending outward. It is, as archaeologist Matthew Johnson has written, "a way of seeing."⁷ People read the world around them in different ways, their landscape created from their experiences in the past and their reactions to the present. In these vignettes there are common elements and it is tempting to see them as unifying, the evidence speaking for itself. The "nasty weed," underpinned by the dark, sandy earth, and washed over by the cool morning breeze, surrounded all three individuals. Viewed initially as a tactile, immediate experience, each person understands these moments based on longstanding cultural constructs which might lead to very different understandings of these common-for-their-period elements. At that same moment, for each person the landscape is a reflection of their past, the product of millennia of human interaction, but felt suddenly and with profound ramifications. The plantation, for that moment, was also the scene of international politics, a source of hope for future success and security, and an agricultural prison crowded with increasing numbers of enslaved Africans confined by the meandering creeks and trees that served as barriers, fertile hunting grounds, and, perhaps, avenues of escape. Ultimately, these landscapes are mirrors for society and speak at many levels.

These vignettes are based on individuals known from the historical record, events long discussed by historians, and the environment personally experienced by the author. They hardly qualify as quality historical fiction, but they are intended to

⁷ Matthew Johnson, *Ideas of Landscape* (Oxford, 2007): 4.

initiate a discussion of landscape for the purpose of better understanding the human past, specifically at Fairfield plantation at the end of the seventeenth century. It is possible that what was described in the vignettes, if not for the absence of written, audio, or video evidence, could have happened - a potential reality if not a documented one. But sufficient direct and analogous evidence survives to propose the scenario and contemplate the meanings behind it.

The three people who served as the subjects of each short story and many others experienced the plantation's fields, buildings, forests, and other people - the quantitative "guts" of this property. But they also experienced the unquantifiable odors, breezes, and sounds that define so much of the landscape. It is not beyond reasonable to imagine that they defined these experiences in similar, very basic, ways. For instance, the soil running across their hands, the sand grains noticeable as they rolled the dirt between forefinger and thumb, and the space between each tobacco plant, between the fence gate and the front door of the manor house and the front door to the master's bedroom; these are observations that each person, albeit in different ways, would see as quantifiable and measurable during that brief moment. Most importantly, time, again, constructed by each person, was still roughly comparable, measured by some in the hours, minutes, and seconds ticking away and by others with the sun plodding across the open sky. The idea that they shared a corporeal moment, one where each person's understanding of their landscape limited potential outcomes and guided personal interactions, provides an opening, however fleeting and tenuous, for us to begin to understand them.

For these individuals, and for our study of them, landscape represented more than just a backdrop to daily life. It was a fundamental aspect of everyday life, reflective of and responsive to the substance of routine existence and yet equally telling of the exceptional instance and the long-term "events" best encompassed in the French Annales School's *longue durée*.⁸ Neither fixed nor dead, and certainly not "undialectical," landscape served as an active agent that provided opportunities and constrained possibilities, resulting in a give-and-take relationship that defined interpersonal relationships, individual and group identities, and the relative success and failures of a society constantly confronted with an environment it could not wholly control.⁹

There are many different definitions of landscape and many disciplines who engage with its study. It is often connected with social theory and the consequences of accelerated change in the late twentieth century. It has contributed to the discussion of the cultural versus the natural world, the reading of landscape as a "repository of human striving," the postmodernists view of it as a "cultural image" whose verbal or written representations provide images, or "texts" of its meaning, and phenomenological approaches and linguistic perspectives emphasizing landscape as "constituted by humans dwelling in it, a set of potentials instantiated by human choice and action" and as a process "yielding a foregrounded, everyday social life from a background range of potential social existence."¹⁰

⁸ Fernand Braudel, *On History* (Chicago, 1982).

⁹ Edward W. Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (London, 1989): 11; Harris, "The Postmodernization of Landscape," 434, 436-437, 438.

¹⁰ Carl Sauer, *The Morphology of Landscape* (Berkeley, 1938, reprint), Yi-Fu Tuan "Geography, Phenomenology and the Study of Human Nature" in *Canadian Geographer* 15 (1971): 181-192, quote from 184; D. Cosgrove and S. Daniels, eds, *The Iconography of Landscape* (Cambridge, 1988): 1;

The study of landscape involves, as a crucial element of its framework, the inclusion of material culture and the archaeological record to understanding culture in human history. Every observable change in landscape, seen through these evidentiary lines, precipitated further changes in social structure, particularly the relationships between people and the spaces they inhabited. As an example, consider a few of the many changes that followed enslaved Africans and indentured servants finished clearing a new field. Introduction of a new species of plant, tobacco, which notoriously robbed the soil of much of its nutrients, began that process while surrounded by the rotting stumps of trees and other brush. Construction of new housing for the enslaved Africans or indentured servants who would work this field necessitated a reorganization of existing quarters (and their occupants), increasing the physical and social distance between slave and master. The resulting segregation of class and race created new obstacles, hardships, and a few opportunities.

These events were often observed and recorded, either in the historical record or the archaeological record. While at that moment they could be seen, heard, smelled, and felt, today, it is possible to see them in the documents, material culture, and physical environment of the property. These are the essential intersecting mediums that reveal landscapes, the result of cultural forces and significant players in the production of culture. Just as a painting is seen as a series of symbols and signs reflective of culture, so is the landscape – at the same time a repository of culture and a many faceted symbol of class structure, social order, and political ideology - an instrument and agent of cultural power. And just as the painting is comprised of

Wendy Ashmore and A. Bernard Knapp, *Archaeologies of Landscape: Contemporary Perspectives* (Oxford, 1999): quote from 3.

layers of paint, and occasionally more than one painting, the landscape is also a many-layered palimpsest.

The plantation, as with any other cultural landscape, was a physical framework that helped structure social life and, in turn, was shaped by it. Changes in the plantation landscape directly reflect that cultural change. The construction of new buildings, the abandonment of others, the tobacco now growing where a house once stood, these examples represent moments when the lives of plantation residents changed in profound ways. Diaries and daybooks seldom include references to these moments, but evidence of these moments survive in the ground, through trace remains of brick foundations, silica-cast plant cells of previously cultivated flora, or the high levels of nitrogen associated with animal feces and the corral which once contained them - the archaeological testimony to past actions. The forced move of an enslaved African household, for example, a large family unit of multiple generations transported from an outer quarter to the home quarter, was both a significant moment and the beginning of a profoundly different everyday life. Would their new lives, closer to the manor house, allow them greater access to food and greater variety in their work schedule? Or would new chores increasingly fill their days and closer supervision by their owner make their less supervised evenings a thing of the past? The archaeological evidence can reflect their changing social conditions as they gained access to a different selection of material goods found more commonly near the manor house and therefore more often broken or passed down as styles changed and the popularity or utility of the item waned. The documentary evidence may simply state that George, Elizabeth, and their three children now reside at the Home Quarter

rather than the New Quarter. Combining these evidentiary lines make it possible to better understand their lives and contextualize them within their changing world.

The plantation, from its fields, trees, and ditches to its people, buildings, and teacups, expressed the values of the many cultures that created it. Because it existed at the intersection of these many cultures, it was complex, varied, and constituted from difficult to decode multi-layered landscapes. Understanding the plantation's various meanings requires a consideration of its constituent elements, including the type, materials and construction technology for buildings, the plan and spacing of fields, the arrangement of space between buildings and fields over time, and the interaction between these elements that reflect the larger cultural landscape. Scholars should not privilege the planter's thoughts or the enslaved Africans' actions over their surroundings; they should not treat the surrounding environment as secondary. These things must be contextualized within the realm of individual experience and yet a person's actions should not be seen as solely determined by the environment that surrounded them.

The three people included in the opening vignette lived very different lives, from their origins to their dreams and in the expectations others had of them. And yet these three people, even as they may broadly represent larger groups, do not adequately cover the diverse experiences seen through the eyes of the many people who stepped foot on the plantation. But our envisioning what they experienced, while acknowledging the difficulty in achieving a truly accurate rendering of the past, is meant to highlight the multiplicity of landscapes present, a starting point for

discussing the crossroads of individual experience and their relationship to changes in the landscape.

This discussion also opens an avenue for discussing the connection between landscape and identity formation. Like landscape, identity is individualistic, fluid, dependent on context, and inextricably connected to the past and the present. It can also be seen in, or recovered from, our analysis of actions, material culture, and in changes to the environment, among other ways. Broadly speaking, the concepts underlying the intersection between landscape and identity are largely timeless and relevant to today, allowing a level of empathy between the present and the past. By studying past landscapes and how others used them to define and redefine their identities, we gain insight into our present condition, deepening our understanding of how our interactions with landscape define our own identity.

In the past and in the present, landscape greatly affected identity. Individual actions are responsible landscape's creation and maintenance, as well as for changes in its meaning.¹¹ Consider what the study of plantations can tell us about how we consider the intertwined nature of identity and landscape. As I will argue in the chapters that follow, the changes to plantation design and function during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries are perhaps the most significant of any period prior to the Civil War and provided an impetus for dramatic changes across the colony. While the plantations of the wealthiest Virginians represent a relatively tiny portion of the colony's population, their actions had a disproportionately large influence on the environment and the development of colonial society. One particular kind of landscape, the "designed landscape," reflected the struggle between the co-

¹¹ Harris, "The Postmodernization of Landscape," 434-443.

dependent strains of agricultural transition and consumer revolution. More so, successive owners reorganized their plantations to continue profiting from agricultural endeavors and to compete with their peers through the display of their wealth and knowledge.

Enslaved Africans played an integral part in these changes, both suffering from the reorganization of the plantation and manipulating their changing roles within the social hierarchy through increased access to goods and changing work schedules, among others. Alongside early eighteenth-century developments including the transition towards natural increase, the eventual decrease in the annual purchase of slaves, and the changing labor needs as plantations converted more fields to mixed grains and fewer to tobacco, the developing "enslaved" landscape restructured almost every aspect of their lives. Creating a black landscape, something discussed in great detail in Chapter 3, provided a degree of independence from this cruel discipline, changing the meaning of these buildings and spaces and replacing them with something different.

These overlapping landscapes changed with each perspective, creating an unavoidable tension as each individual projected their identity onto the physical fabric of the world around them and the spaces that connected these places. The massive brick manor house, discussed in Chapter 4, figured prominently within each of these landscapes, connected through an individual's involvement in its design, construction, use, and maintenance. An architectural "enigma," the building represented both the pioneering introduction of stylish details and craftsmanship and the increasingly fickle nature of an elite focused on the latest and newest fashion for buildings and other

displays of wealth.¹² A point of fascination and much speculation by architectural historians throughout the twentieth century it is variously seen as an example of an English town house in a colonial wilderness, a pioneer in the construction of a gentleman's entertaining house, and the architectural "Lucy" linking the building styles of the mid-seventeenth century with those of the brick building boom of the early eighteenth century in Virginia.¹³ It survives as an archaeological site, as a name on a map, and as the subject of six late nineteenth-century photographs.

Fairfield plantation is the focus of this dissertation on Tidewater Virginia plantations of the late seventeenth century because it was home to one of Virginia's most socially prominent and politically influential colonial families, the Burwells, from the late 1640s through the Revolutionary War. The Lewis Burwell II's 1694 manor house demanded attention from all who saw it, serving as the focal point of the plantation, but largely escaping any specific reference in surviving documents of the period. Surrounded by a large formal garden, slave quarters, and tobacco fields, the plantation complex is generally comparable to the colony-wide elite of this period. A decade of archaeological research allows insight into this fluid, changing landscape that in many ways challenges how scholars conceptualize a Virginia plantation's physical layout and how changes throughout the seventeenth, eighteenth, and

¹² John Francis Speight, "Architects Find 'Fairfield' an Enigma," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 12 September 1948. The author discusses the phasing of construction and questions surrounding it, as well as the building and family's connections with Governor Francis Nicholson, Thomas Jefferson, and visits from William Byrd II.

¹³ Henry Chandlee Forman, *The Architecture of the Old South: The Medieval Style 1585-1850* (New York, 1948): 59, 71, 96; Cary Carson, "Plantation Housing: Seventeenth Century" in Carson and Lounsbury, *The Chesapeake House*, 110; Thane Harpole and David A. Brown, "The Architecture of the Fairfield Manor House: The Convergence of Wealth, Style, and Practicality," *Quarterly Bulletin of the Archeological Society of Virginia* 63 (2007) 3: 136-48.

nineteenth centuries affected the lives of the people living within its bounds.¹⁴ The plantation survived under the ownership of a few families and without significant subdivision for much of its history, surrounded by agricultural field and not much else. Perhaps the most important reason for focusing on Fairfield plantation, though, is because for a place so prominent in the history of the colony, few historians have paid more than a glance in its general direction.¹⁵

¹⁴ Thomas T. Waterman and John A. Barrows, *Domestic Colonial Architecture of Tidewater, Virginia* (New York, 1968, reprint); Brown and Harpole, *Quarterly Bulletin*, 3.

¹⁵ The exceptions to this statement include John Blair, who completed an excellent early thesis on the Burwell family, Ed Chappell, who authored the property's nomination to the state and federal registers of historic places, the recent detailed architectural analysis of the building by Cary Carson, William Graham, Carl Lounsbury and others among the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Department of Architectural and Archaeological Research, and the staff of the Fairfield Foundation, namely Thane H. Harpole and the author. See John L. Blair, *The Rise of the Burwells*, Thesis (M.A.), College of William and Mary (Williamsburg, 1959); Edward A. Chappell, *The Fairfield Site*, Nomination, National Register of Historic Places (Washington, D.C., 1973); Carson and Lounsbury, *The Chesapeake House*; Brown and Harpole, *Quarterly Bulletin*, 3.

Chapter 1: Landscape and the Plantation



Aerial view of the Fairfield plantation archaeological site. The manor house ruins are in the foreground and the York River runs along the north edge of the image. The Fairfield Foundation, White Marsh, Virginia.

Visit Fairfield plantation today and you will find an open field surrounded by forest, a dirt road, and a small grove of sycamores and hackberry trees surrounding more than a few bricks strewn about the ground surface. The manor house, recognized in photographs by its diagonally-set chimney stacks, is missing. The plantation is hidden within the increasingly suburban bedroom community of eastern Virginia's greater Hampton Roads. It is not open to the public. There are no buildings to speak of, and with modern development at a distance, it is exceedingly difficult to locate one's self in space, much less in time, and the only truly twentieth-century elements of

the landscape are a few telephone poles and the car you drove in to get here. In many ways, the plantation is invisible.¹⁶

Architectural historians, fascinated with the house as a pioneering example of early classical architectural design in Virginia, and genealogists, dedicated to sustaining the Burwell family name among the colony's earliest "big men," kept the history of this place alive for most of the twentieth century. A "first family of Virginia," the Burwells are best known for their other plantations, namely Carters Grove and Kingsmill on Virginia's Lower Peninsula.¹⁷ Their Gloucester plantation, from which the family and their buildings descend, is relatively unknown; the Burwells sold the property in 1787, the house destroyed by fire in 1897. Its subsequent dismantling in the early twentieth century removed the centerpiece of the plantation almost entirely from sight, leaving behind fields, forest, and roads much like those seen today. The loss of this remarkable building and the destruction of Gloucester County's records in two disastrous fires (1820 and 1865) further obscured this family line and its role in colonial Virginia history.¹⁸ Upon first glance, both the

¹⁶ "Plantation," in the context of my research, is defined as an estate that typically raises one or two large cash crops and uses forced resident labor. I avoid using a specific number of enslaved workers to differentiate a plantation from a farm as the number of workers needed to effectively run a plantation varied based on the primary cash crop.

¹⁷ Both plantations are best known for their more recent use as historic house museum and gated community, respectively, although they attained some fame for the extensive archaeological investigations undertaken by Ivor Noël Hume of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation and William Kelso then of the Virginia Research Center for Archaeology (now known as the Virginia Department of Historic Resources).

¹⁸ When historians focus on Virginia in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, they very predictably gravitate towards a handful of counties, including nearby York, Lancaster, and Middlesex, where court documents survived in greater number than the "burned counties" which lost most of their official records to fires during the Civil War and at other times. The result is a tendency, whether intentional or not, to treat the areas with more substantial collections as representative of the larger coastal plain region, or subregion groups (such as those focused on specific river drainages), thereby undervaluing research into other, less well-documented counties. This is not an overt critique of any specific study, but rather one scholar's lament that more historians should consider researching the very important contributions of these understudied localities, thereby avoiding a trend towards generalization justified by a narrow understanding of the county's research potential.

property's setting and the historical record appear nearly silent regarding this plantation and its owners. But what remains of Fairfield plantation, including the soil, the trees, the ravines, springs, and creek beds that bound the property, the foundations and artifacts in the ground, speaks of a deeper history, one as prodigious and alive as any other plantation in Virginia. Its history is not lost; it survives in the landscape.

Landscape, as discussed in the introduction, is more than what an individual sees or a snapshot of the physical world. It is the extent of personal knowledge and experience and it significantly affects how we identify ourselves and others. The same was true for people in the past. Landscape is the entirety of the world in which people lived. It forms a roughly bounded space, broadly conceived, that includes not only observable and measurable objects and spaces such as fields, buildings, forests, and creeks, but also experience, of objects and spaces, tasks performed, and knowledge of both the imaginary and the described. People conceive their landscape differently, through passive knowledge of their existence within, and active manipulation of, the landscape. These landscapes changed over time, resulting in near infinite numbers of potential landscapes.¹⁹

The multiplicity of perspectives are best engaged through nuanced, multi-scalar analyses of individuals, groups, and even regions. The movement of fencelines, the introduction of a new crop, the slowly rotting frame of a quarter, and the leak in its roof can change a person's perception and experience of a landscape.²⁰ While some changes are relatively minor (and temporary) others are more dramatic. Ultimately,

¹⁹ Tim Ingold, "The Temporality of the Landscape" in Julian Thomas, editor, *Interpretive Archaeology: A Reader* (London, 2000): 510-530.

²⁰ The term "quarter" is often used interchangeably by scholars to mean an individual building which houses enslaved people and a group of such buildings that constitute a working group of enslaved people assigned to a portion of acreage on a plantation.

landscapes are unique, personal, and change over time, but for every individual experience there are moments that result in a sense of shared meanings that transcend the relatively rare descriptions that survive from a handful documented events.

The "plantation" landscape, as both an example of one type of landscape and a focal point of this study, is not defined by size, but by the perception of each individual who experienced it and what he or she defined as meaningful. For example, an enslaved African may define the plantation landscape as encompassing the buildings, forests, animals, persons, and space owned by his or her owner and encountered on a given day. This would differ significantly from how a landowner, the child of a landowner, or a visitor to a plantation would define the plantation landscape. The landowner might experience these same elements but define the plantation landscape as extending to the edges of his influence, to the neighboring parish church he paid to construct, or the mill at the edge of his property, or even the waterway his ships use to arrive and depart. His wife might define it as a backdrop for presentation, a space to impress some and intimidate others, protecting and educating her children while ensuring their long-term security through its wealth-producing fields and laborers. Still others, perhaps a neighboring landowner or a parish vestryman, might see the plantation landscape as bounded by the streams and notched trees which legally demarcate the property's boundaries. The discussion of these landscapes not only highlights their interconnectedness with nearly every aspect of Virginia history, but also challenges scholars to use landscape as a launching point for

research into economics, religion, politics, gender, and other underlying themes that defined the colonial period.²¹

This approach is inspired by a generation of archaeologists and architectural historians, but none more so than Dell Upton and his 1985 article “White and Black Landscapes in Eighteenth-Century Virginia” where he addressed “the social experience of architecture.”²² The often reprinted article continues to inspire readers trying to understand the physical world and its relationship to the greater history of the colony. Upton addressed the range of spatial divisions, an individual’s changing perception of the landscape as he or she moved through it, and the challenge of deciphering the language of landscape through its many diverse elements, some unified and some fragmented. His fascination with the landscapes and architecture of eighteenth-century Virginia dealt as much with our recent understanding of it as with those who created, modified, and recreated it over two hundred years ago.

Upton's work admirably addressed the experience of landscape from the perspective of a “pre-Revolutionary Virginia, with its racially and socially stratified population,” but did so with a focus on surviving structures and often without the benefit of detailed historical accounts or archaeological descriptions. It is a starting point for what follows. Where his research examined Virginia as a colony, this dissertation examines in detail a single plantation, one among a small group of the wealthiest of wealthy planter residences, and compares it with a handful of

²¹ This definition is influenced and partially derived from Richard H. Schein's approach to landscape as “a particular spatial and visual ensemble, often equated with particular places and times.” Richard H. Schein, “The Place of Landscape: A Conceptual Framework for Interpreting an American Scene” in *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 87 (1997), 4: 660-680.

²² Dell Upton, “White and Black Landscapes of Eighteenth-Century Virginia,” in Robert Blair St. George's *Material Life in America: 1600-1860* (Boston, 1988): 357-369.

predecessors, contemporaries, and antecedents. While Upton's work looks generally at Virginia before the Revolutionary War, this dissertation focuses specifically on the end of the seventeenth century. Finally, Upton's study focuses on the surviving architecture of the period, while incorporating archaeological and historical evidence whenever possible. Taking a slightly different approach, the research described here originates from the archaeological and historical evidence, and looks beyond the primary residence, but remains inherently multidisciplinary. This dissertation highlights the power inherent in change and examines the ripple effects that occur when individuals modify the world around them, causing or reacting to pressures beyond the plantation—a purpose shared with Upton.

Changing perspectives, over time and between distinct populations within the plantation, reveal the effect of both internal and external pressures. Internally, individual behavior, while never static, provided a sense of how to operate within the world, a structure or cultural background against which they operated, or *habitus*.²³ What people saw every day and their corpus of past experiences influenced their behavior. Referencing Upton's work once again, and building on Ellis and Ginsburg's interpretation of "standpoint theory," people "literally viewed the world differently and ... these differences influence[d] the way they inhabited their shared environments."²⁴ This principle is particularly useful in understanding the role of

²³ Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: 1979).

²⁴ Ellis and Ginsburg interpret standpoint theory as originating in Marxist feminist interpretations of class struggle, contending that "women, because of their subjection to a patriarchic system, were able to perceive their place in the world, and that of their oppressors, in a wholly different and unique light." Individuals from different groups, in this case the working class and the capitalist class, understood power relations differently and experienced the capitalist system differently, resulting in each having special knowledge that the other did not. They extend this to cover the differently perceived geographies of the enslaver and the enslaved. Clifton Ellis and Rebecca Ginsburg, "Introduction" in

individual perception in the lives of the enslaved laborers, devising coping mechanisms and forms of resistance derived from their African culture that, often imperceptible to their owners, provided them with an avenue of action and control over their own lives and, as Upton put it, carefully existing “outside the official articulated processional landscape of the great planter.”²⁵

Enslaved Africans, as well as elite planters, middling farmers, and tenant farmers, indentured servants, and every other person who experienced the plantation helped create landscape through their actions - actions observable in the archaeological and historical record. They possessed agency. The study of landscape uncovers agency through the study of practice as reflected norms of "culture" and abstract structures.²⁶ Archaeologist Matthew Johnson explains that:

practice is embedded in everyday life; the patterns of moving to and from the fields, the actions of ploughing and harrowing the soil, the everyday rhythms of individual, household, and community life. It is bound up with social ideas and values, in that practices embody and replicate expected ways of behaving. It is also bound up with social tradition and memory - the recognition that we do things this way because they always have been done this way "since time out of mind."²⁷

Observation can lead towards an empiricist view of the past and a "common sense" approach to interpreting the actions of individuals based on our present understanding of their lives tempered by the context of our own experience. This approach is fraught with intellectual peril. It can obscure the many potential conclusions that might emerge from a full embrace of multivalency, or the

Clifton Ellis and Rebecca Ginsburg, editors, *Cabin, Quarter, Plantation: Architecture and Landscapes of North American Slavery* (New Haven, 2010): 6.

²⁵ Upton, "White and Black Landscapes," 367.

²⁶ John C. Barrett, *Fragments from Antiquity: Archaeology of Social Life in Britain 2900-1200 BC* (Oxford, 1993).

²⁷ Johnson, *Ideas of Landscape*, 142.

understanding that these observations have many values and meanings. Depending on the individual, fences may limit access, but not sight; a door may be unlocked, but still deny access; a nailery was at once a workplace, a shelter from the elements, a home, and a symbol of wealth, independence, and knowledge. These examples illustrate how experience, perception, and imagination each provide a different perspective on human spatial practice. The use of fences can relate to the flow of goods, people, and information. The unlocked door can represent symbolic space and spatial semiotics. The nailery can include elements of iconography, cartography and spatial aesthetics.²⁸ Archaeologist Chris DeCorse explains that historical archaeology, in particular, can "fill gaps in the inventory of evidence about the past, but more importantly it augments, extends, and problematizes historical interpretation by identifying 'entanglements' in our knowledge base that force us to the edges of history's comfort zones." The key to understanding these landscapes is not to grasp every conceivable perspective, but rather to embrace the multiplicity of perspectives and their relevance, acknowledging that there is always another way to "see."²⁹

For instance, we accept that shifts in meaning can occur without any visible change in the landscape's physical fabric. Archaeologists are particularly attuned to this principle that contrasts concepts of "space" and "place." Space is quantifiable. You can move through it, and it may or may not have meaning for those who experience it. Place, on the other hand, is immeasurable, perceived, and experienced.

²⁸ Spatial aesthetics is defined by the Spatial Aesthetics Research Group, including Drs. Alexander Kranjec, Eva Simms, and Mark Paterson, as the "experiences of space and place that are studied in their bodily-perceptual, cognitive-emotional, socio-cultural, and artistic-expressive manifestation." Alexander Kranjec, Eva Simms, and Mark Paterson, *Spatial Aesthetics Research Group*. [<http://spaceandaesthetics.wordpress.com/about/>, accessed 9 October 2013].

²⁹ Christopher R. DeCorse, *An Archaeology of Elmina: Africans and Europeans on the Gold Coast, 1400-1900* (Washington D.C., 2001): 16; James Deetz, *In Small Things Forgotten: An Archaeology of Early American Life* (New York, 1996): 74.

It is laden with meaning. To put it better, “what begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value.” The simple act of existing within space, without any modifications, converts it into place. Places populate the landscape and make it unique.³⁰

One of the most intriguing reasons for the study of plantation landscapes is to reconstruct how those living there, including enslaved Africans and elite merchant-planters, transformed spaces into places and assigned them with different meanings. Plantation owners adapted and employed a “designed landscape,” using the location, orientation, and size of slave quarters, among other places, in an attempt to dominate and control the enslaved population.³¹ But these practices were not always successful. As Ellis and Ginsburg point out, “slaves expressed their autonomy, restored their dignity, and even achieved their freedom...through manipulation of the very landscapes designed to restrict them.” These groups negotiated constantly, sometimes openly, but often covertly or even subconsciously. The buildings, forests, fields, roads, and other observable elements of the plantation became persistent symbols of the institution, not just the agricultural process or the family that owned them. Through a perceived permanence, through their construction often with the labor of enslaved Africans, and through their placement, buildings, as one element of the plantation, demonstrated the entrenched presence of slavery, forcing others to redefine themselves

³⁰ Garret Fesler, “Excavating the Spaces and Interpreting the Places” in Ellis and Ginsburg, *Cabin, Quarter, Plantation*, 28. See also Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis, 2001): 6; See also, Barbara Heath, “The Big House and the Slave Quarters: African Contributions to the New World” in Ellis and Ginsburg, *Cabin, Quarter, Plantation*, 177-192.

³¹ I employ the phrase “merchant-planter” to acknowledge the dual priorities these individuals balanced to maintain their elite status. “Merchant” precedes “planter” in this instance because it describes a particular type of planter, differentiating them from the majority of property owners across the Chesapeake region, highlighting their role in the import and export of goods for their own use and, often, for sale to their neighbors and for the store houses that many of them maintained on or near their plantations.

in relation to this landscape. The alternative was the physical modification or destruction of that landscape to create figurative and literal distance from its meaning. Put simply, “slavery shaped the landscape of slaveholders [and the enslaved]”, their actions, “...and consequently their lives.”³²

But when, to what degree, and how often did these adaptations occur? How did the increase in the number of enslaved Africans and the increasing intensity of agricultural pursuits affect the organization of workers’ living quarters and arrangement of fields? How did Virginians at the end of the seventeenth century define themselves through the world around them? The form of landscape analysis undertaken here has the potential to contribute to these questions and to the historiography of colonial Virginia. The research that follows will show that the development of the plantation followed alongside the development of other formal and informal means of racializing slavery. Along with changes in the legal, economic, religious, political, and social institutions that emerged in seventeenth-century Virginia, the plantation “ordered users according to race” and “contributed to the ideology of African inferiority.”³³

Virginia's enslaved population, dominated by recently introduced Africans representing numerous tribal groups and regions, increased dramatically during the last quarter of the seventeenth century. During the same period, elite merchant-planters, as the legislative leaders of the colony and majority of slave owners, changed both the legal status and the labor expectations for people they increasingly viewed as “property.” The plantation, by some definitions, reached its most efficient state when

³² Fesler, “Excavating the Spaces,” 27-50; Clifton Ellis and Rebecca Ginsburg, “Introduction” in Ellis and Ginsburg, 3.

³³ Ellis and Ginsburg, “Introduction,” 6.

its labor force consisted entirely of enslaved people forced to work towards the successful profiting from the agricultural production of cash crops.³⁴ The system of plantations in Virginia appeared to reach this level at the end of the seventeenth century, as increasing numbers of large plantations witnessed their labor force change entirely to Africans. This was intentional, the elite merchant-planters devising and implementing a template for the colony follow, demonstrating the most efficient, racialized slave labor system by creating and sustaining a landscape of slavery.

The plantation was more than a functional space for the production of cash crops or the workspace of enslaved laborers. It was also the showplace of the elite, the nexus for innovation, and a laboratory for experimentation, all intrinsically linked to slavery but also linked to other societal trends. Historical archaeologist Martin Hall, employing a critical materialism approach, explains that it is possible to explore “the objectification of ideology, power, and status in landscapes, domestic architecture, and everyday material culture” in order to reveal a world that “not only contains signatures of power but reveals “subtle contestations” between and among groups and individuals.” People reacted to and structured their everyday lives differently depending on their experience and perception of the plantation.³⁵

To that end, the natural setting of the plantation, and the persistent presence of an uncontrollable “nature,” significantly influenced the landscapes that emerged

³⁴ There are many different types of plantations, including fishing plantations, environmental plantations (e.g. tree farms), and industrial plantations, that have evolved over time, not all requiring or incorporating slave labor in the form discussed here. Some employed “para-slavery” or slavery-in-kind through their manipulation of low-wage workers in debt-bondage, for example late nineteenth-century share-cropping. While the most consistent elements of a plantation are the production of a single cash crop and the sale of that crop for non-local markets, the incorporation of mass labor controlled by a single owner or organization has long been associated with it.

³⁵ Martin Hall, *Archaeology and the Modern World: Colonial Transcripts in South Africa and the Chesapeake* (London, 2000): 102.

during this period. A drought, flood, or insect infestation might severely damage crops or destroy them entirely, but would not necessarily change next year's crops or directly affect the treatment of enslaved laborers. In contrast, the success of a crop in any given year might depend on more than human actions, such as the amount of fertilizer, the arrangement of drainage ditches, or even the speed at which the workers harvested crops. According to historical archaeologist Mary Beaudry, a focus on places, objects, and their historical contexts "allows human beings an active role in creating meaning and in shaping the world around them; they are seen to interact with their environment rather than simply react to it." Matthew Johnson adds that "...nature and culture are dialectically related - each creates and defines the other, and one cannot be made sense of without an understanding of the other." Nature does not determine culture, nor can culture control nature, but neither is comprehensible without "a deep and complex understanding of the mutual construction of both."³⁶ Tim Ingold furthers this discussion, suggesting that rather than accepting a "sterile opposition between the naturalistic view of the landscape as a neutral, external backdrop to human activities, and the culturalistic view that every landscape is a particular cognitive or symbolic ordering of space," that scholars rethink this relationship in terms of a "taskscape," arguing that we should view landscape as "an enduring record of – and testimony to – the lives and works of past generations who have dwelt within it, and in so doing, have left there something of themselves."³⁷

³⁶ Johnson, *Ideas of Landscape*, 144; see also Oliver Rackham, *Trees and Woodland in the British Landscape*, 2nd edition (London, 1990); Oliver Rackham and Jennifer A. Moody, *The Making of the Cretan Landscape* (Manchester, 1994).

³⁷ Ingold, "The Temporality of the Landscape," 510.

It is essential to connect events, such as the acquisition of land or the purchase of an African slave, with longer historical trends, such as sustained experimentation with alternative crops or continued reliance on day laborers and local craftsmen, to identify how people prioritized everyday needs and how this reflected their desire to control the world around them. Hall expands on this, stating “the study of people, objects, places, activities, and events that had seemed to be on the edges of historical significance is helping to reformulate historical understanding by adding agency, complexity, and hence relativist sensitivity” to our understanding of past cultures and the clues embedded in “material culture are rich indicators of the plays of power.”³⁸

The plantation reflected peoples' origins, the desire to emulate, to express knowledge, power, and wealth. As one example, the home, whether a slave hut, tenant house, or manor, through its common association with specific people, operated as a symbol of its owner and builder, but most often of its occupants. The areas around the home, from the yard to the tree line to the roads that connected it with the world beyond, complimented that symbol, often extending and modifying its meaning while receiving meaning from its association with the home. The elite merchant-planters, largely responsible for the designs of plantations, are the most frequent subjects of study. How did they conceive of their “designed landscape” and how far did they go to demonstrate their knowledge of contemporary fashion, their desire to profit from human bondage, and their dream to control everything around them, including nature? As the number of specialized rooms, buildings, and activity areas on a plantation increased, how did their locations change and how did this reflect an

³⁸ Mary C. Beaudry, “Public Aesthetics versus Personal Experience: Worker Health and Well-Being in 19th-Century Lowell, Massachusetts” in *Historical Archaeology* 27 (1993), 2: 91; Hall, *Archaeology and the Modern World*, 71.

evolving segregation of class and race? While these questions primarily reflect an interest in the lives of merchant-planters, they also involve understanding the enslaved Africans who largely constructed the plantation, grew and harvested its crops, and outnumbered its white population.

A successful plantation, its owner and its designed landscape, inspired emulation. The owner's peers and those aspiring to be similarly successful, desired an association with these symbols of success and, depending on each individual's circumstances, to copy and implement much of the plantation's design. The process followed much the same trajectory as Virginia merchant-planters' efforts to emulate their European counterparts. Subsequent generations, though, would innovate and modify the designs to meet their needs, the specific environment of their plantations, and respond to advances in technology and labor management. How each merchant-planter implemented the ideals of a well-managed, designed plantation landscape would partly define her or his identity. How it affected those who lived and worked, modified and responded to these changes demonstrated how important changes in the landscape influenced the practice of slavery. Relatively little is known about the specific changes in plantation design evolved during the late seventeenth century, though, compared to the better known periods that followed.

The disciplines most responsible for recent advances in understanding the plantation during this period, and most likely to further these discussions, are historical archaeology and architectural history. Their careful attention to chronology and the use of new datasets within the New Archaeology and its post-processual descendant drove research in new directions over the last forty years while broadening

some historical debates and reconfiguring others. Their crucial contributions include a focus on the vernacular, on elements of everyday life that went unrecorded in historical documents, resulting in new questions for the established narrative of Virginia history. Critics point out the inaccessibility and presentation of data, an often static and a condensed representation of the past (sometimes a reflection of their data's limitations, sometimes a reflection of the author's limitations) as major faults in these disciplines. These inadequacies resulted in an inconsistent acceptance by historians who more often employed the findings as anecdotes and illustrations rather than understanding the foundations of these new avenues of research.³⁹ Examples include the dramatic maps of archaeological features and landscapes that display new dimensions of historical data. Representing change over time via a two-dimensional image of postholes, trash pits, brick bondwork, wood framing, nail patterns, and score marks in plaster, the map is inherently easy to discern for a trained practitioner, but often akin to a foreign language to others.

An implicit, untheorized, and subsequently unexamined landscape is uninteresting and unworthy of focused study. The introduction of new archaeological and architectural data in the 1970s and 1980s, though, and the conclusions derived from this evidence forced scholars to reconsider what they thought the landscape looked like in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Virginia. As the value of this data increased for scholars of this period, the comparably few large-scale studies received

³⁹ Mathew Johnson cites the parallel trend in English landscape archaeology where "...the role of archaeology became supplementary and supportive to a text-based narrative rather than oppositional and critical." The data became a showpiece, underutilized by historians uninterested in testing "the rigour of the interpretation being offered," preferring "a series of illustrative anecdotes which referred to a grand underlying story about the nature and development of the English landscape." Johnson, *Ideas of Landscape*, 68.

tremendous, often overblown attention. These studies shaped a paradigm for the interpretation of landscapes, one that continues to plague our understanding of colonial plantations and their occupants. Through no fault of their own, these early studies became the norm compared to all others, the foundations on which subsequent authors built new and persistent narratives. Scholars must challenge themselves to effectively translate the complex and changing plantation landscapes without oversimplifying evidence and losing the valuable connections between people and their surroundings.⁴⁰

Recovering past landscapes, including the landscapes of late seventeenth-century plantations, requires a synthesis of very different forms of evidence, including documents, environmental and archaeological data, and material culture. This study uses these often intersecting evidentiary lines as the point of departure for historical inquiry. As an example, knowing the shape, texture, weight, and color of a wine bottle exponentially extends the interpretive value of the already significant reference of “wine bottle” in an account book. The same is true for a field of tobacco or a slave hut. But material culture, architectural, and archaeological data are accompanied by their own narratives, resulting in new questions and leading scholars to engage with the historiography in unique ways. For instance, modifications to a plantation's designed landscape are seldom referenced in the historical record, relative to their frequency. Even the most diligent manager would find it difficult to record all of the

⁴⁰ As an example, consider one of the most frequently cited plantation studies in Virginia archaeology: Kingsmill Plantation. A desire to demonstrate to the public the value of archaeology has inadvertently done a disservice to the legacy of these plantations and their residents. The maps show a single interpretation, two at most, of what a landscape looked like over multiple generations of use. While it is very effective at portraying the author's interpretation of a singular moment in time, it sacrifices the complexity that not only allows for alternative interpretations, but also documents the longer landscape history of this site. William M. Kelso, *Kingsmill Plantations, 1619-1800: Archaeology of Country Life in Colonial Virginia* (New York, 2004).

many minor, and occasional major, changes happening everyday. But these events are highly reflective of greater change in the lives of the people living on the plantation and their interaction with the world around them. Something as simple as repairs to a fence, the clearance of a new field, or the abandonment of a road, might reveal shifts in the way people viewed the landscape and each other. It is important to understand how these events coincided with (or contradicted) other lines of evidence, including those noted in the documentary record that cannot be recovered through careful interpretation of archaeological and architectural evidence. It is even more important to understand the frequency and significance of these changes and to question whether the limitations of other evidentiary lines have left this area of inquiry misunderstood or under-researched. Historian Allan Mayne sees as essential the “study of materiality to emphasize and recalibrate ambiguity as a powerful tool with which to extend cross-disciplinary interpretation of modern history...decentering historical understanding and thereby stimulating analytical innovation.” It is the synthesis of these lines of evidence that constitute the greater contribution to our knowledge of human lives and events in the past.⁴¹

The multi-disciplinary approach to historical inquiry has become more common in recent years, but remains a relatively uncommon approach to studying Virginia’s late seventeenth-century plantations. Already a relatively understudied period of the colony’s development, there is substantially more written about the early seventeenth-century, particularly the early period of contact between Europeans and

⁴¹ Alan Mayne, “On the Edges of History: Reflections on Historical Archaeology” in *The American Historical Review* 113 (2008), 1: 94; see also, Leora Auslander, “Beyond Words” in *American Historical Review* 110 (2005), 4: 2; Laurie A. Wilkie, *The Archaeology of Mothering: An African-American Midwife's Tale* (London, 2012): xxi.

Native groups, and the tumultuous era of the American Revolution. There are considerably fewer works that cover the years in-between or that incorporate sources on landscape, identity, and plantation development. Beyond this period, though, and occasionally encompassing it, historians, geographers, sociologists, architectural historians, and archaeologists have a well-established track record for the study of plantations. But despite the broad range of contributors, there are relatively few studies which focus on the relationship between people and landscape and most incorporate a very limited discussion as it relates to larger issues of race, economics, ethnicity, gender, and other valuable avenues of inquiry.⁴²

The study of Fairfield plantation helps to fill this gap. What follows will document how the incorporation of a multidisciplinary approach with a highly contextualized narrative can contribute to a deeper discussion of landscape, identity, and the evolution of the plantation during late seventeenth-century Virginia. The plantation as a unit is well suited for a dissertation-length study because an analysis of

⁴² Historians by far dominate the field of plantation research, including noteworthy studies by Blassingame, Genovese, and Stamp. Sociologists and anthropologists known for their contributions include Raper, Raper and Reid, Rawick, and Thompson of the former, and Rubin, Mintz, and Mintz and Wolf of the latter. John W. Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South* (Oxford, 1979), Eugene D. Genovese, *In Red and Black: Marxian Explorations in Southern and Afro-American History* (Knoxville, 1971); Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York, 1974); Kenneth M. Stamp, *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Antebellum South* (New York, 1956); Arthur F. Raper, *Preface To Peasantry: A Tale Of Two Black Belt Counties* (Columbia, 1936); Arthur F. Raper and Ira De Augustine Reid, *Sharecroppers All* (Chapel Hill, 1941); George P. Rawick, *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography* (Westport, 1972); Edgar T. Thompson, *Race Relations and the Race Problem: A Definition and an Analysis* (Durham, 1939); Edgar T. Thompson, *Plantation Societies, Race Relations, and the South: The Regimentation of Populations: Selected Papers of Edgar T. Thompson* (Durham, 1975); Sidney W. Mintz, "The Plantation as a Socio-Cultural Type" in Vera Rubin, editor, *Plantation Systems of the New World* (Washington D.C., 1959): 42–53; Eric R. Wolf and Sidney W. Mintz, *Haciendas and Plantations in Middle America and the Antilles* (no publisher, 1957). More recent scholarship includes noteworthy contributions by Durant and Kottnerus, Morsman, Isaac, and others. See Thomas J. Durant and J. David Kottnerus, eds., *Plantation Society and Race Relations: The Origins of Inequality* (Westport, Conn., Praeger, 1999); Amy Feely Morsman, *The Big House After Slavery: Virginia Plantation Families and Their Postbellum Domestic Experiment* (Charlottesville, 2010); Rhys Isaac, *Landon Carter's Uneasy Kingdom: Revolution and Rebellion on a Virginia Plantation: Revolution and Rebellion on a Virginia Plantation* (Oxford, 2004).

the changes in the designed landscape can reflect the struggle to reconcile the immediacy of the physical world with regional and global pressures in economics, politics, and society.⁴³ The multi-disciplinary approach of landscape can further our study of race, class, and gender and yield specific and particular results that cannot be recovered through other analyses.⁴⁴ The need to examine the relationships between a landscape's constituent elements, including the type, materials, and construction technology for buildings, the plan and spacing of fields, the arrangement of space between buildings and fields over time, and the interaction between these elements that reflect the larger cultural landscape.

The responses to social, cultural, and economic pressures active in the landscape are represented in the quantifiable archaeological data. Put another way, the spatiality of life is reflective of significant change. Each generation of laborers and owners on plantations enacted changes in the organization of their buildings (interior

⁴³ Noteworthy examples of historians, archaeologists and historical anthropologists who have combined spatial and material culture perspectives in their research include Philip Morgan, Theresa Singleton, Maria Franklin, Patricia Samford, Frasier Neiman and Jillian Galle (enslaved African/African American culture in the English colonies), Philip Levy, John Coombs, David Muraca, Doug Ross, Dwayne Pickett, Cary Carson and Willie Graham (early colonial brick buildings, slave quarters, and post-in-ground buildings). Their groundbreaking work not only confronts over-generalized descriptions of colonial life but also broadens our understanding of the plantation as a distinct group. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*; Theresa A. Singleton, *I, Too, Am America: Archaeological Studies of African-American Life* (Charlottesville, 1999); Maria Franklin and Garrett Fesler, eds., *Historical Archaeology, Identity Formation, and the Interpretation of Ethnicity* (Williamsburg, 1999); Jillian E. Galle and Amy L. Young, *Engendering African American Archaeology: A Southern Perspective* (Knoxville, 2004); Patricia Samford, *Subfloor Pits and the Archaeology of Slavery in Colonial Virginia* (Tuscaloosa, 2007), Philip Levy, David Muraca, and John Coombs, "Revisioning Seventeenth-Century Virginia Architecture, Brick by Brick" conference paper, The Society for Historical Archaeology, Annual Conference, Quebec, 2000; Willie Graham, Carter L. Hudgins, Carl Lounsbury, Fraser D. Neiman, and James P. Whittenburg, "Adaptation and Innovation: Archaeological and Architectural Perspectives on the Seventeenth-Century Chesapeake" *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd ser., 64 (2007): 451-522; John Metz, Jennifer Jones, Dwayne Pickett, and David Muraca, *"Upon the Palisado" and Other Stories of Place from Bruton Heights* (Williamsburg, 1998); Dwayne W. Pickett, *The John Page House Site: An Example of the Increase in Domestic Brick Architecture in Seventeenth-Century Tidewater Virginia* Thesis (M.A.), College of William and Mary (Williamsburg, 1996); Douglas E. Ross, *Domestic Brick Architecture in Early Colonial Virginia* Thesis (M.A.), College of William and Mary (Williamsburg, 2002).

⁴⁴ Charles E. Orser, *Historical Archaeology* (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, 2004): 279; see also Mayne, "On the Edges of History," 97.

and exterior) and activity areas, and the end of the seventeenth century was no exception. This period, in particular, is of interest because it coincides with an expanding slave population that not only necessitated an increase in quarters to house them, but also the agricultural buildings and ancillary support structures needed for processing ever larger quantities of tobacco, investment in food crops for the plantation's population of humans and livestock, and an increase in the number of skilled laborers supporting the enterprise. This re-organization resulted in the constant negotiation and renegotiation of space and the re-conceptualization of the plantation. By concentrating on these relationships scholars can refocus research on the view of the plantation from its occupants, rather than the few surviving accounts that reference these dynamic landscapes.

The next two chapters set the stage for this type of analysis. Chapters 2 and 3 exist at the intersection between the lives of the Burwell family and their enslaved Africans, respectively, at Fairfield Plantation and Virginia's late seventeenth-century historiography. Without assuming that these people and their surrounding landscape were typical (or atypical), these chapters attempt to consider landscape as they knew it from the evidence that remains. Lewis Burwell II's extensive investment in enslaved laborers and calculated pursuit of ever increasing amounts of tobacco resulted in a seasonal labor surplus which, coupled with a desire for greater economic security, led to increased profits and an expanded realm of possibilities for his future and that of his plantation. Firmly grounded in both the archaeological and documentary evidence for Fairfield Plantation, Chapter 2 documents the significance of Lewis Burwell II among the colony's elite, including his involvement in the economic, political, and social

activities of the late seventeenth-century gentry. But others also influenced the plantation's development. The enslaved laborers he purchased or inherited possessed significant influence, too. Chapter 3 will begin to address their landscape, arguing for their role as integral actors in the history of the plantation, their actions speaking volumes despite their relative silence in the few surviving documents.

Chapters 4 and 5 will address the emergence of designed landscapes within the evolution of plantations at the end of the seventeenth century. The centerpiece of the plantation, the manor house, is discussed in detail in Chapter 4, while Chapter 5 extends beyond this element to the greater plantation. In both chapters, I consider the factors that influenced landscape, including increased political and economic investment in towns, masonry architecture, and the development of public buildings, and how they brought about a reconceptualization of the plantation and its boundaries as a response to dramatic changes in Virginia at the end of the seventeenth century..

Chapter 6 includes a discussion of evidence for designed landscapes of earlier and contemporary plantations and how the direct links between the Burwells and the owners of these properties resulted in the adaptation and use of specific elements at Fairfield. It also examines the role enslaved laborers had in influencing the design and use of these landscapes, their meaning, and their success. Chapter 7 considers how Lewis Burwell II's contemporaries and the generation of planters that followed, in this case, descendants of Lewis Burwell II, incorporated the lessons learned in their own plantations, including the Fairfield landscapes of his son and grandson. The conclusion offers a brief consideration of the relevance of this research to the study of present landscapes and its reflection on our understanding of our identity.

Chapter 2: Lewis Burwell II and his World

Born into the enviable position of first son of an ascending family, Lewis Burwell II achieved the loftiest heights any Virginian could reasonably aspire to during a lifetime. Politically, economically, and socially, it is reasonable to assume his accomplishments exceeded everyone's expectations. His aspirations are lost to time, though, as are his diaries, daybooks, and most of his personal papers, although the ruins of his manor house and plantation contain archaeological evidence that continues to reveal the complexity of his noteworthy life.⁴⁵ Compared to his peers, of whom there were few, he rose to the top of the colony's merchant-planter class and achieved the wealth and reputation that would establish his sons and daughters on similar ascendant trajectories before his death in 1710. And while his name and his actions are largely forgotten in the narrative of Virginia history, his legacy is still visible figuratively and literally just beneath the surface.

An only child, born during the tobacco boom of the mid-seventeenth century, Lewis Burwell II received an exceptional education in the politics and economy of the Chesapeake. Without the benefit of attending school in England, already a rarity for even wealthy families, and with no evidence that his parents hired one of the few

⁴⁵ Excavation began at Fairfield Plantation (Virginia Department of Historic Resources Archaeological Inventory Site 44GL0024) in November 2000 and continue to this day. Fieldwork began with a shovel test survey of the approximately 60 acres of field and forest surrounding the manor house ruin. Select excavations began shortly thereafter, investigating the manor house foundation and Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) anomalies, revealing evidence of numerous intact subsurface features. Over the subsequent decade of excavations, investigations focused on the mid-eighteenth-century formal garden, early eighteenth-century clay borrow pit, and eighteenth-century slave quarter. More recent research has focused on the systematic sampling of the approximately three acres surrounding the manor house and the continued shovel test survey of properties beyond the initial 60-acre survey. Excavations in 2014 will also continue investigations of the manor house ruin. The most recent summary of work can be found in Brown and Harpole, *Quarterly Bulletin*.

documented tutors in the colony to teach him, his education likely came from within his frequently changing family. No less than four father figures influenced Burwell's upbringing, serving as role models, helping shape his actions and attitudes as an adult through their actions. It is this form of education that might be classified as most common for children of any family in seventeenth-century Virginia. The quality of instruction, the subjects, and the skills learned depended on the status of the instructors.

The first of these four individuals, Lewis Burwell II's father, Lewis Burwell I, established the family in Gloucester County a few short years before his death in 1653.⁴⁶ His history in Virginia began much earlier, though. His family originally intended to help colonize northern Carolina, but circumstance kept them in the Old Dominion. Having spent his childhood in England, he likely felt the same uncertainty that affected other settlers entering a frighteningly wild and unpredictable new world. But the colony's tremendous untapped potential, and a close network of friends and family joining him on the voyage, perhaps made the idea of settlement in a new country appealing. No less than ten of Lewis Burwell I's relations joined in the endeavor, including his mother, Dorothy Bedell Burwell Wingate, his stepfather, Treasurer of Virginia Roger Wingate, and his step-uncle-in-law, Edward Kingswell, along with an extended family of cousins, nieces, and nephews, suggesting a commitment to settle rather than a short term stay.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Lyon G. Tyler, "Inscriptions on Old Tombs in Gloucester Co., Virginia" *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 2 (1894), 4: 220; Burwell Historical Association of America, *Proceedings of the Burwell Family Picnic: Held at Burwell's Farm, Milford, Connecticut, August 18, 1870* (Cleveland, 1870).

⁴⁷ After Lewis Burwell I's father, Edward Burwell II, died in 1626, his widow Dorothy Bedell Burwell remarried Edward's first cousin, Roger Wingate, Treasurer of Virginia (1639-41) later that year. The marriage brought into one family Edward and Dorothy's two daughters and one son, and Roger's two daughters from his first marriage, and one daughter between Roger and Dorothy. Roger's brother-in-

river from his future home.⁴⁹ His connections with early investors in the Virginia Company, such as Edward Burwell, and contemporaries among the colony's leadership, including his step-father, Roger Wingate, though, could not protect him from the same unpredictable economy and everyday maladies affecting others in Virginia.⁵⁰ His marriage to Lucy Higginson, daughter of another prominent family in the colony, provided him with the opportunity to have children and establish his own legacy. A likely dowry, now lost, brought with it additional property or money and the marriage helped establish familial connections that provided valuable intangible assets that resulted in greater social and financial security, at the very least sustaining, and likely improving, his status. By the mid-seventeenth century, many English

⁴⁹ Lewis Burwell I likely emigrated to Virginia in 1633 aboard the *Mayflower* which was destined for North Carolina, but the connecting ship contracted to transport them south never arrived and the list of passengers was submitted for headrights that would later secure a portion of Lewis Burwell I's landholdings in Virginia. See Robert A. Parker, *The Burwells of Kingsmill and Stoneland: An Account of an American Family, 1633-1900* (Charlottesville, 1997): 3,4. John Blair is less certain that Lewis Burwell I accompanied his family to Virginia for those six months, prior to their return to England. The circumstantial evidence is fairly convincing, though. Regardless, there is consensus that Lewis Burwell I is established in the colony by 1640 at the latest. See Blair, *The Rise of the Burwells*, 1; William Lawson Grant, James Munro, and Almeric William Fitz Roy, eds., *Acts of the Privy Council, Colonial Series, 1613-1680* (Hereford, 1908): 211; no author, "Historical Notes and Queries" in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 2 (1895): 99.

⁵⁰ Edward Burwell was listed in "The Second Charter to the Treasurer and Company, for Virginia," dated 23 May 1609. See William Walter Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia, from the First Session of the Legislature in the Year 1619*. Volume 1 (Charlottesville, 1969): 84; see also Burwell Historical Association of America, *Proceedings of the Burwell Family Picnic*. Robert A. Parker believes it may have been a different Edward Burwell II (although perhaps still related), of Houghton Park, Harlington, Bedfordshire, England mentioned in the second charter of 1609. Parker, *The Burwells of Kingsmill and Stoneland*, 3; Alexander Brown, *Genesis of the United States*, Volume I (New York, 1890): 220. Also, Gabriell and John Bedell, Lewis Burwell I's uncles, are both listed as members of the Virginia Company and came to Jamestown with the second supply in 1608. They are listed on the second charter in 1609. See no author, "Virginia Gleanings in England" in *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 23 (1915): 265; Brown, *Genesis of the United States*, 218. Gabriell is listed as one of the "adventurers to Virginia" in 1618/19 and both brothers are listed in 1620 in "A Declaration of the State of the Colony and Affaires in Virginia" as well as the Quo Warranto proceedings of 1623-24. See Susan M. Kingsbury, ed., *The Records of the Virginia Company of London*, Volume III (Washington, D.C., 1906): 80; 318-319; Susan M. Kingsbury, ed., *The Records of the Virginia Company of London*, Volume IV (Washington, D.C., 1935): 364. For reference to Wingate's position as Treasurer, see William Lawson Grant, James Munro, and Almeric William Fitz Roy, eds., *Acts of the Privy Council, Colonial Series, 1613-1680* (Hereford, 1908): 253-254.

immigrants no longer thought of living and working in Virginia as a temporary endeavor. Lewis Burwell I apparently shared that sentiment from the first moment he stepped ashore.

Lewis Burwell I's acquisition of the Fairfield tract established the family's permanent seat in the colony. His earlier properties served as stepping stones, assets he later sold to support his larger agricultural ambitions. It is possible to imagine Lewis Burwell I, as he walked the boundaries of his newly patented property in 1648, trudging through the "Oake Swamp," marking the hickory, sweet gum, and cedar trees at distinct corners of his land, and naming "Bacon Point" at the southwestern tip of the tract. Ultimately, he chose a location relatively close to this point for his first home on the property, situated atop a steep rise looking out over the wide and flat Carter Creek.⁵¹

Few documents survive from the plantation's earliest years. The archaeological evidence is equally sparse. Lewis Burwell I's decision to establish his family seat north of the York River in an area only partly settled in the 1640s marks a calculated risk to settle a large acreage (2,350 acres) previously uncultivated by European tobacco farmers but reasonably isolated from potential conflict with Virginia Indians. Despite the retreat of English settlers by treaty from the lands north of the York River in 1646, the area of greatest conflict with Virginia Indians proved to be much further west, north, and south, although land continued to be purchased from

⁵¹ Nell Marion Nugent, comp., *Cavaliers and Pioneers, Abstracts of Virginia Land Patents and Grants: 1623-1800*, Volume I (Richmond, 1934): 184; Blair, *The Rise of the Burwells*, 5. The naming of Bacon Point is curious as it suggests a potential relationship with Nathaniel Bacon, the elder, far earlier than the marriage between Lewis Burwell II and Bacon's niece, Abigail Smith, in the late 1670s.

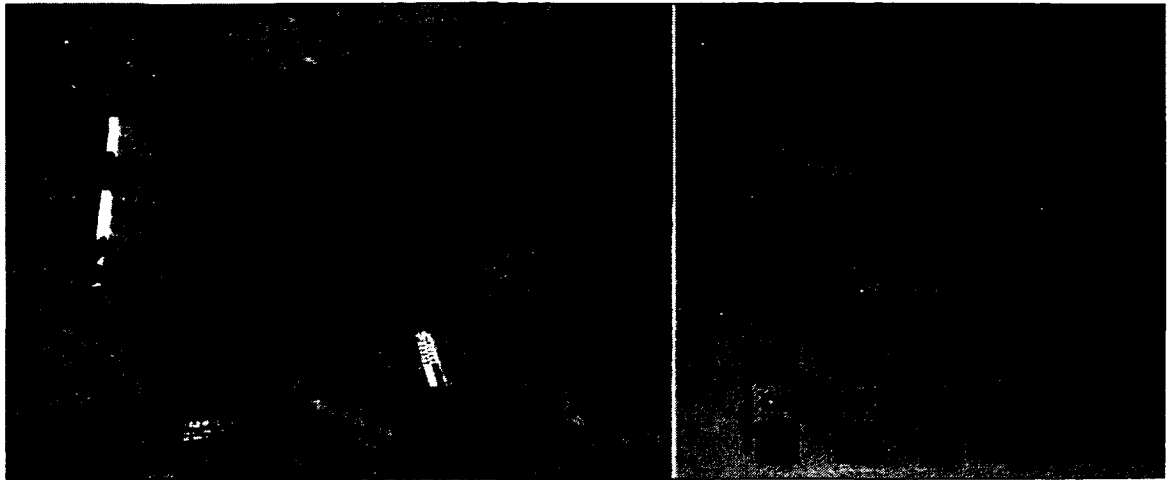
Virginia Indians as late as 1655.⁵² An added incentive to Burwell's settlement in this area may have been the possibility that this portion of York County would soon split into a new county (Gloucester County). A new county would require leaders to fill the positions of Burgess, justice of the peace, and sheriff, among others.⁵³ Another factor that influenced his choice to settle in this location included efficient access to developing trade networks connected by the creeks running directly into the lower York River, a short distance from the Chesapeake Bay and still within a day's sail to the colony's capital at Jamestown.

Archaeological evidence, albeit frustratingly scant, marks the location of a relatively small group of mid-to-late seventeenth-century buildings to the south and east of the later manor house. It remains unexcavated. The refuse recovered from a tree hole, specifically hearth cleanings from a nearby residence, included a mix of higher status items, including a seventeenth-century butterfly hinge and a 1581 English silver six pence, and more common objects, including wrought iron nail fragments, wine bottle glass, and a handful of imported and locally-made tobacco pipe fragments.⁵⁴ Excavations on the site during the 1960s uncovered a brick-lined, tiled floor cellar abandoned and filled with trash during the early eighteenth century, but,

⁵² Warren M. Billings, *The Old Dominion in the Seventeenth Century: A Documentary History of Virginia, 1606-1700* (Chapel Hill, 2007): 406; Alden T. Vaughan, ed., *Early American Indian Documents: Treaties and Laws, 1607-1789*, Vol. 2, *Virginia Treaties, 1607-1722* (Frederick, Maryland, 1983); Deed of Gift for Chiskoyake Indian Land to Edward Wyatt, October 29, 1655, Huntington Library, San Marino, California, photostat reproduced in Polly Cary Mason, ed., *Records of Colonial Gloucester County Virginia: A Collection of Abstracts from Original Documents Concerning the Lands and People of Colonial Gloucester County*, Volume II (Berryville, 1946): ii.

⁵³ Burwell's 2350-acre patent was previously claimed by Francis Carter (900 acres) and Symon Bosman (1050 acres) but escheated to the crown. Nell Marion Nugent, comp., *Cavaliers and Pioneers, Abstracts of Virginia Land Patents and Grants: 1623-1800*, Volume I (Richmond, 1934): 184.

⁵⁴ Fairfield Plantation, Site 44GL0024, Feature 13, north half, Layer A. For a complete inventory of artifacts recovered from this feature, see Fairfield Foundation, Artifact Inventory (2013).



A tree hole filled in the seventeenth century (Feature 13) (left) and seventeenth-century imported and locally-made tobacco pipe fragments (right).
The Fairfield Foundation, White Marsh, Virginia.

despite extensive excavations, the location of this building, likely the earliest plantation manor house at Fairfield, remains unknown.⁵⁵

Using the plantations of Lewis Burwell I's contemporaries as approximate equivalents for his own, including the plantations of Richard Kemp at Rich Neck and Colonel Thomas Pettus at Littletown, it is possible to roughly recreate an image of Lewis Burwell II's birthplace. In the mid-seventeenth century, the Burwell estate likely consisted of a main house, perhaps nearby quarters for laborers, likely indentured servants and perhaps a few enslaved Africans, a small group of support buildings for storing corn and drying tobacco, and maybe a distant quarter or two with a tenant renting outlying acreage. While Lewis Burwell I rightly placed his time and effort on his tobacco crops, his house and its surroundings contributed to his sense of identity and that of his family. His house, fields, quarters, and ancillary buildings, reflected his priorities, the limitations of his world, and his aspirations. The brick

⁵⁵ John Blair, personal communication, 2001. Fairfield Plantation, 44GL0024, 036-0061, Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Archaeological and Architectural Inventory Files (Richmond, 2013).



Colonel Thomas Pettus plantation site, c. 1641-50, James City County, Virginia.
Carson and Lounsbury, *The Chesapeake House*, 102.

lined and tiled cellar, while potentially invisible to any passerby, marked a significant investment of time and money while exhibiting access to difficult-to-find craftsmen who could make and lay brick. A brick cellar was likely one of a series of improvements, including greater square footage and a greater number of independent spaces, that separated this house and family from lower class households. This first, admittedly conservative image of the plantation landscape, as affluent as the Burwells appeared to be, would pale in comparison to what would follow.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ McFaden et al., *Interim Report: The Archaeology of Rich Neck Plantation*; Fraser D. Neiman, "Domestic Architecture at the Clifts Plantation: The Social Context of Early Virginia Building" in *Northern Neck Historical Magazine* 28 (1978): 3096-3128; Kelso, *Kingsmill Plantation*.

The only surviving personal document written in Lewis Burwell I's hand is a letter dated October 12th, 1652 to "Mr. Walter Brodhurst of Nominie Plantation," in which Burwell appreciates Brodhurst's continued friendship and assistance "w'ch I hope shall not dye unrequited if I survive this my long sickness w'ch hath bene of a yeare's continuance." That sickness consumed him the following year. The letter reveals personally difficult times, his request for assistance bordering on desperation. He wrote, "The porke & Corne cannot come in a more welcome time, some troubles I have undergone in [***] of time but God hath delivered me out of them." He was confident of his recovery, though, promising to "be ready to assist you in anything that lies in my power. By the next I shall inlarge w'ch [at] this time I cannot being ill & unsettled in minde."⁵⁷ While he did not succeed in fulfilling these goals, his son would more than exceed his father's expectations. Although no other documents survive to attest to Lewis Burwell I's aspirations, it is hard to imagine him feeling any disappointment with what the next generation would accomplish. They would rise beyond all reasonable expectations and enlarge the already substantial foundation on which the family would build for the next century.

Lewis I's death at 33 years old was unfortunate, but not entirely unexpected.⁵⁸

The average European male in the colony at mid-century lived into his thirties,

⁵⁷ no author, "Historical and Genealogical Notes and Queries," in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 9 (1902), 3: 331; Blair, *The Rise of the Burwells*, 7; no author, "Two Seventeenth Century letters" in *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 9 (1902): 331-333.

⁵⁸ Tyler, "Inscriptions on Old Tombs," 220; Burwell Historical Association of America, *Proceedings of the Burwell Family Picnic*; see also Jennie Stokes Howe, "Gloucester Beginnings with the Burwells" in *The Family Tree Searcher*, 5 (2001), 1: 44; Sally Nelson Robins, "The Story of the Removal of the Burwell Tombs – Carter's Creek – The Burwells and the Burwell Tombs" in *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 23 October – 12 November 1911.

whether he came from an above average economic and social condition or not.⁵⁹ Left with an infant son, Lucy Higginson pursued short-term security and long-term prospects for her family through a second marriage. It is to Lucy's great credit, though, that young Lewis Burwell II not only survived, but prospered. Through her selective marriages to two of Virginia's most prominent gentlemen she ensured that her son would learn how to act within Virginia's burgeoning merchant-planter elite from two highly qualified practitioners. Her social acumen in the male-dominated world of early Virginia led to marriages with influential and well-established men capable of maintaining the family among the colony's uppermost class. Unfortunately, there are no documents in her hand that survive, nothing that reveals her thoughts or aspirations, her tombstone perhaps a noteworthy exception (discussed below). Much of what we know of her life is stitched together from court documents, leaving scholars to use these references and research into her contemporaries to interpret the life of Lucy Higginson Burwell Bernard Ludwell.

The process of understanding who Lucy was must start with understanding her upbringing. The only daughter of Joanna (née Torkesy) and Captain Robert Higginson, her father received numerous accolades for his leadership in militia conflicts with Virginia Indians and for his command of the militia at Middle Plantation (later Williamsburg) in 1644-45. Her father came from a family of longstanding stature, the son of Thomas Higginson, Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Painter-Stainers, of Berkswell, Warwickshire. When and why Lucy's family emigrated to Virginia is not known, but their success and her father's notoriety as "one

⁵⁹ Darrett B. Rutman and Anita H. Rutman, *A Place in Time. Explicatus* (New York, 1984): chap. 4; Allan Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves: The Development of Southern Cultures in the Chesapeake, 1680-1800* (Chapel Hill, 1986): 62.

of the first Comand'rs that subdued the country of Virginia from the power of the heathen" placed her among the better known families of the time.⁶⁰ The family's accomplishments likely established high expectations for Lucy and her children, which included at least three daughters and three sons by three husbands over her long life.⁶¹

Marriage provided the greatest source of stability and security for mid-seventeenth-century families, especially for those with social and political aspirations. In her role as widow, Lucy exerted control over her family's Gloucester County plantation and considerable land investments elsewhere in the colony, elevating her status as a highly desirable match for any eligible suitor. She chose the widower William Bernard and they married before November 24th, 1654, less than five days after Lewis Burwell I's death.⁶² It is highly likely that Bernard was a close friend of the family or business associate and that Lewis Burwell I's sickness, referred to in his writing, debilitated him to the extent that the relationship was foreseen by all parties before his passing. Lucy understood the sacrifices necessary to survive, maintain a family, and prosper in the seventeenth-century colony.

William Bernard, from what can be wrenched out of the scant documents of the time, appeared to suited her well. A colonel in the local militia and a landholder of significant means, he served as a tobacco inspector in Isle of Wight County, joined the

⁶⁰ Tyler, "Inscriptions on Old Tombs," 220; see also, Howe, "Gloucester Beginnings with the Burwells," 44; Robins, "The Story of the Removal of the Burwell Tombs."

⁶¹ Lucy's children included Lewis Burwell II (son of Lewis Burwell I), Elizabeth, Lucy and George Bernard (all with William Bernard), and Philip Ludwell II (son of Philip Ludwell I). She also helped raise Philip's daughter, Jane, from an earlier marriage, perhaps to Jane Cottington.

⁶² The marriage is documented in the sale of land inherited by Lucy from her father in Middle Plantation to George Reade by November 24th, 1653; no author, "Notes from the Records of York County" in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 24 (1915), 1: 40; J.H.P., "The Gorsuch and Lovelace Families" in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 25 (1917), 1: 88.

Council of State by 1641 and continued his service at the highest level of colonial office through at least 1660 and possibly longer. He also helped lead the colony in its attempts to diversify its exports, promoting the effort to make silk culture successful in Virginia. *Reformed Virginia Silk Worm*, published in 1652, includes a reference to him, and in a rare surviving letter of the period, John Ferrar Jr., wrote of him to his sister, Virginia Ferrar: "Yea, worthy Bernard that stout Colonel informs the lady the work most facile And of rich silken stuffs made shortly there He hopes that he and others shall soon wear."⁶³

Five years old at the time of his mother's second marriage, Lewis Burwell II likely received a son's education at Bernard's hand or at the very least served as an apprentice of sorts, assisting his stepfather in the management of the Fairfield estate. Bernard's accomplishments rank him among the more successful Virginia gentry. He accumulated land for speculative purposes as well as cultivating tobacco in both Isle of Wight and Lancaster Counties. His entrepreneurial mentality, seen in his investments in silk manufacturing, separate him somewhat from his peers, though. His position on the Council of State elevated Lucy and Lewis Burwell II's status through association to a level significantly higher than that of her first husband. Although Lewis Burwell I's land remained for the future benefit of his son, neighbors acknowledged the union of Lucy and William as bringing the earlier patented lands under Bernard's purview, likely to his own economic benefit.⁶⁴ William brought one

⁶³ William Walter Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia, from the First Session of the Legislature in the Year 1619*, Volume 1 (Charlottesville, 1969): 432, 499, 508, 526; Edward D. Neill, *Virginia Carolorum: The Colony Under the Rule of Charles the First and Second, A.D. 1625-A.D. 1685, Based Upon Manuscripts and Documents of the Period* (Albany, 1886): 184-86, 242, 261-63.

⁶⁴ no author, "Notes from the Records of York County" in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 24 (1915), 1: 40.

child, Lucy (1647), with him from a previous marriage and brought two more into this world with Lucy, specifically daughter Elizabeth (1654) and son George (1658).

The family apparently split time between Fairfield and Bernard's Isle of Wight County lands. For the length of their marriage, the Bernard family name became associated with the Burwell landholdings and both Lucy and Elizabeth married into prominent Gloucester families (Gwynne and Todd, respectively), while the birth of Elizabeth and George is noted in the records of Isle of Wight County. William Bernard's connections with his neighbors and other landowners south of the James River, including many politically prominent merchant-planters, provided Lewis Burwell II with a substantial group of acquaintances in his adult life, building business and personal connections across the southern and northern extremes of the colony over the next fifty years.⁶⁵

Unfortunately, the marriage lasted only twelve years. William Bernard's death in 1665 once again left Lucy a widow.⁶⁶ Her household included no less than three children, including Lewis Burwell II, Lucy (step-daughter), and Elizabeth, George having likely died soon after birth or potentially as late as 1676.⁶⁷ Lucy took considerably longer to marry her third husband. After two-and-a-half years, the 42-year-old twice widow married Phillip Ludwell in 1667.⁶⁸ A recent emigrant (1660)

⁶⁵ Sam Sloan, *Sam Sloan's Big Combined Family Trees*. [<http://www.anusha.com/pafg540.htm#14555>, <http://www.anusha.com/pafg541.htm#14561>, and <http://www.anusha.com/pafg138.htm#14548>, accessed 9 October 2013]. Lucy's birth is assigned to 1647, which, if accurate, suggests she was the child of William and his first wife, possibly also named Lucy.

⁶⁶ William Bernard died March 31, 1665. John T. Kneebone, et al., eds., *Dictionary of Virginia Biography*: Volume 1 (Richmond, 1998): 459-460; see also, Douglas Richardson, Kimball G. Everingham, and David Faris, eds., *Plantagenet Ancestry: A Study in Colonial and Medieval Families* (Baltimore, 2004): 103.

⁶⁷ The inscription slab of a child (died 1676) was found complete at Fairfield in 1911, possibly marking the burial of George Bernard. See Robins, "The Story of the Removal of the Burwell Tombs."

⁶⁸ YCDOW Book 4: 159; J.H.P., "The Gorsuch and Lovelace Families," 88.

from Bruton, Somersetshire, Philip resided with his brother, Secretary of the Colony Thomas Ludwell, at his home plantation, Rich Neck, in Middle Plantation. Not far from their home lived their cousin, Governor William Berkeley, who resided at Greenspring Plantation, not far from Jamestown Island. Like Bernard, Ludwell represented an ascendant step on the colony's social and political ladder for Lucy, although the union benefitted him as much as her. Unlike Bernard, Lucy was fourteen years his senior. His already substantial network of political and social connections increased exponentially, allowing him access to new land and trade connections. The marriage enhanced his political and social positions in the colony, connecting him with the widow of a council member (Bernard) and an established Virginia family. In return, Lucy maintained the stability and security necessary to raise her family, providing young Lewis and his half-siblings with a step-father of significant economic means, fully entrenched in the colony's highest political and social circles. The marriage produced one child, Philip Ludwell II, but involved raising Jane, Philip's daughter from an earlier marriage, and the family resided at Fairfield.⁶⁹

The 25-year-old Philip Ludwell emigrated along with numerous other wealthy immigrants from England in the 1650s and 1660s, coinciding with the rule of Oliver Cromwell. He and his cohort challenged and eventually dominated the Virginia gentry, developing a self-conscious ruling class that accumulated massive amounts of land, secured and made exclusive the colony's highest political positions, and demonstrated their right to rule through their personal presentation, the grounds of

⁶⁹ no author, "Bacon's Rebellion – Philip Ludwell's Account" in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 1 (1893), 2: 178; Ethel Armes, *Stratford Hall: The Great House of the Lees* (Richmond, 1936): 15; Archibald Bolling Shepperson, *John Paradise and Lucy Ludwell of London and Williamsburg* (Richmond, 1942): 453.

their homes, and their behavior.⁷⁰ Establishing a legacy ranked high on their list of priorities, positioning their sons to succeed them and establishing nearly hereditary right to the Council of State. Ludwell achieved this through his appointment to the Council of State in 1674/5. Serving as Deputy Secretary by 1676/7, he attained the full post of Secretary after his brother's death in 1680.⁷¹

Despite only a seven-year-age difference between eighteen-year-old Burwell and his new stepfather, the two apparently maintained a close friendship with Ludwell acting as both mentor and confidant throughout Lewis Burwell II's life. Burwell's youth, knowledge and experience combined with Ludwell's political savvy and connections resulted in their joint ascendancy of colonial Virginia's political hierarchy. The Fairfield estate temporarily came under Philip Ludwell's domain and, as it had with Bernard, became known by the community under his name.⁷² But that association did not hinder Lewis Burwell II's pursuits or future prospects.

The close relationship between Lewis Burwell II and his second step-father, with its political and social advantages, likely diffused what could easily have become a contentious period in the plantation's history. Having already reached majority, Lewis Burwell II stood in line to run his father's estate by the late 1660s, but it is likely that Philip Ludwell and Lucy held onto this job. The loss of Gloucester County's court records to fires in 1820 and 1865, as well as the Abingdon Parish Vestry Book, prevents scholars from knowing when Lewis Burwell II first entered politics, likely at the lowest levels of parish governance, serving as vestryman. His

⁷⁰ Bernard Bailyn, ed., *The Debate on the Constitution* (New York, 1993).

⁷¹ Jon Kukla, *Speakers and Clerks of the Virginia House of Burgesses, 1643-1776* (Richmond, 1981): 89, 91.

⁷² A 1671 document makes reference to Capt. Ludwell's overseer in Gloucester; see Billings, *The Old Dominion in the Seventeenth Century*, 203.

name appears for the first time as an adult (age 18) when a neighbor refers to his ownership of Fairfield in 1666/7 and Burwell serves as a witness to a deed in Rappahannock County at age 21 in 1670.⁷³ But records of his actions are rare until two years later. In 1672, the family celebrated two new additions: Lucy gave birth to Philip Ludwell II and Lewis Burwell II married Abigail Smith.⁷⁴ Abigail, the daughter of Anthony Smith and Martha Bacon, was sole heir to one of Virginia's wealthiest men, her uncle, Nathaniel Bacon, the elder.⁷⁵

The substantial household included as many as seven individuals including two married couples. Whether by necessity, by preference, or simply by circumstance, the family remained a cohesive group, Lewis Burwell II and Abigail adding their first child, daughter Joanna, in 1674/75. The two families lived side-by-side on the plantation for several years, but this changed, sadly, when Lucy Higginson Burwell Bernard Ludwell died in 1675. Her tombstone read "In perpetual memory of ye virtuous Lucy Burwell the loveing and beloved Wife of Major Lewis Burwell...who not being more worthy in her birth than vertuous in her life exchanged this world for a

⁷³ On March 18, 1666/7 "Mr. Burwells land" is referenced in Lawrence Smith's patent of 807 acres. Previously, the abbreviation "dec'd" was included in boundary references, referring to his father, or the boundary was listed as adjoining Bernard or Ludwell's property. See Mason, *Records of Colonial Gloucester County* 68-69. On June 9, 1670, Lewis Burwell is listed as a witness to a deed from John Prosser to Henry Thackrey. See Rappahannock County, Deed Book IV (1668-1672): 519.

⁷⁴ On February 4, 1672, Philip Ludwell Jr. (d. 11 JAN 1726/7) was born in Abingdon Parish. See no author, "Bacon's Rebellion – Philip Ludwell's Account" in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 1 (1893), 2: 178. Also, about 1672 (the actual date is uncertain) Lewis Burwell II married Abigail Smith. See Frederick Adams Virkus and Albert Nelson Marquis, *The Abridged Compendium of American Genealogy: First Families of America: A Genealogical Encyclopedia of the United States*, Volume 7 (Chicago, 1942): 391; no author, *The Southern and Western Literary Messenger and Review*, Vol. XIII (Richmond, 1846): 464-465; L.Y. Lipscomb III, "'Lewis Burwell III of 'Kingsmill,' York County, Virginia" in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 55 (1947), 2: 650; Will on Nathaniel Bacon the Elder in Mason, *Records of Colonial Gloucester County*, 113.

⁷⁵ Nathaniel Bacon, the elder, resided at Kings Creek Plantation on the south side of the York River in York County. He should not be confused with his cousin of the same name, often referred to as Nathaniel Bacon, the rebel, who led a revolt against Virginia Indians and the government of the colony in 1676; Stephen Saunders Webb, *1676, The End of American Independence* (Syracuse, 1995).

Better..."⁷⁶ The absence of reference to her second and third husbands, beyond their inclusion in her name, despite their elevated status and accomplishments, is unexpected and remains unexplained.

Lucy's death removed the most stable presence in Lewis Burwell II's life. The few records left to profile her life can be seen to portray a strong and protective mother and an adept guide through the harrowing world of early Virginia. Balancing the care of at least five children by three husbands, primarily at Fairfield plantation and with little evidence of support from her own family, her relatively long life of nearly a half century (she lived between 47 and 51 years) is truly admirable. Her efforts, as much as Lewis I and any of her subsequent husbands, established Lewis II in the most advantageous position possible at a time of great change in the colony.

Lucy's death marked a significant transition for Lewis Burwell II. Twenty-seven years old and the head of his own household for the first time, he gained sole possession of the plantation and his inheritance. Philip Ludwell I returned to his brother's house, Rich Neck, with his son and daughter, Philip II and Jane.⁷⁷ Elizabeth Bernard, Lewis Burwell II's half sister, may have stayed with her half brother at Fairfield until she married Thomas Todd in 1681.⁷⁸ Lewis Burwell II and Abigail

⁷⁶ Previous to this marriage was the birth in 1665 of one daughter to Philip, Jane Cottingham, who later married Col. Daniel Parke, Jr. See Ethel Armes, *Stratford Hall: The Great House of the Lees* (Richmond, 1936): 15; Archibald Bolling Shepperson, *John Paradise and Lucy Ludwell of London and Williamsburg* (Richmond, 1942): 453. Note that George, Lucy and William Bernard's son, likely died young but may have still been alive. Also, Lucy Bernard, William Bernard's daughter from a previous marriage, had married and moved to her husband, Edmund Gwynne's, home. Quote: see Howe, "Gloucester Beginnings with the Burwells," 44.

⁷⁷ Armes, *Stratford Hall*, 15.

⁷⁸ About 1681, Major Thomas Todd II married Elizabeth Bernard. Their first son, William, was born in August 1681. See Sam Sloan, *Sam Sloan's Big Combined Family Trees*. [<http://www.anusha.com/pafg541.htm#14561> accessed 9 October 2013].

welcomed a second daughter, Elizabeth, in 1677, and added substantially to their family in the years that followed.⁷⁹ A strong network of familial ties and the prominent economic and social position Lucy helped him obtain made her death easier to endure, but the responsibility for continuing the family's ascendancy landed squarely on his shoulders. His decisions over the subsequent twenty-five years ultimately determined the family's place in the history of the colony. He would not be alone, though. Despite his step-father, half-brother and half-sister moving away, he maintained close relationships with his extended family throughout his life. As an example, Philip Ludwell II, the youngest of Lucy's children and barely three years old when he moved from Fairfield to Rich Neck with his father, remained a loyal friend and confidant to his older half-brother, Lewis Burwell II, for the remainder of their lives.⁸⁰

The period that followed Lucy's death included new opportunities and challenges. Lewis Burwell II's first quarter-century began during a period of relative economic predictability and social calm within the young colony. From the time his father died through his mother's passing, he witnessed the transformation of his homeland from a society once characterized as an uncoordinated group of disconnected tobacco plantations where each man dreamt of being called "Lord" (albeit over a "vast, tho' unimprov'd Territory"), to one befitting the name "Country of Virginia" where the wealthy, exclusive, and established societal elite maintained order in politics and trade despite a slowly declining market for tobacco.⁸¹ But this transformation did not escape scandal and conflict. At the end of the century's third

⁷⁹ In June, 1677, Elizabeth Burwell was baptized. See Robert W. Robins, *The Register of Abingdon Parish, Gloucester County, Virginia, 1677-1780* (Arlington, 1981).

⁸⁰ Philip Ludwell II followed in the footsteps of his uncle, Thomas, and father. He was chosen Speaker of the House of Burgesses at age 23, the youngest person ever to hold this office.

⁸¹ Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790* (Chapel Hill, 1982): 14-15.

quarter the colony underwent what some consider Virginia's first revolution: Bacon's Rebellion.

The conflict took its name from Nathaniel Bacon (the younger), a recent immigrant whose apparently unchecked ambition and rapid ascent among the ranks of the elite came at a time (and a cost) that few could have predicted. A seemingly insatiable desire for land by Virginia's elite and a continually expanding population of immigrants and recently free men pushed the colony's frontier much further to the west, beyond the fall line, into the colony's Piedmont. While the gentry sought control over virgin land for speculative sale or rent, or for increasing numbers of satellite plantations, a new generation of one-time indentured servants, now freedmen, patented or purchased land as a means of escaping the tired soils and overpriced lands in the eastern part of the colony. Expanding western settlement brought increased interaction with native groups, resulting in positive and negative outcomes. The westward expansion increased trade along routes monopolized by the elite through trading posts and selective treaties. Maintaining those exclusive trading relationships came into conflict with already tense relations between new immigrants and older settlers who encroached on Indian territory, turning forest to field and altering it legally (in English minds) and physically through the hoe and the axe.

These factors highlight an increasing disparity between rich and poor colonists in Virginia. What had once been held up as a land of opportunity for settlers of all social standing had now evolved into a more traditional, stratified structure with increasingly restrictive access to positions of leadership. The steady decline of profits from tobacco cultivation, partly due to decreasing soil productivity from overfarming

in the eastern counties, as well as depressed prices resulting from a market flooded with tobacco, led to further stress between the haves and the have nots. Bacon (the younger) took advantage of a series of violent altercations and murders along the frontier, seized on the political and social unrest existing just beneath the relatively the colony's apparently calm surface, leading a rebellious group of mostly poor indentured servants, middling farmers, and some members of the merchant-planter elite against the western Virginia Indian population and later, after they reacted negatively to his actions and attempted to bribe and then reprimand him, against the colony's leadership. Nathaniel Bacon (the younger) led his army across the colony, burning Jamestown, sacking the governor's plantation and those of his supporters, and entered into Gloucester County. His choice of Gloucester reflected its status as Virginia's most populous county, especially for middling planters and tenant farmers.⁸² But their support never materialized and Bacon died on Thomas Pate's plantation in the northern part of the county, a site which would later serve, temporarily (and ironically), as the governor's residence.⁸³

Despite Bacon's failure and death, his short-lived conflict changed the course of Virginia's history, having burnt the capital to the ground and drawn the attention of the English monarchy and the recall of Governor Berkeley to England. The bloody,

⁸² There were 1,687 tithables in Gloucester County, including Kingston Parish (now Mathews County), in 1674, making it the most populous county in the colony in terms of tithables. Only New Kent (1,299) and Rappahannock (later divided into Richmond and Essex Counties) had more than 1,000 tithables. Gloucester County held similar advantages in 1682 and 1699, rising to 2,005 and 2,514, respectively. A total population count in 1699 counted 5,730 people in Gloucester County, remaining the most populous in the colony. King & Queen County, the next highest county, had 4,306 - a difference of over 1,424 people. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, 412-413.

⁸³ Warren M. Billings, ed., *The Papers of Francis Howard, Baron Howard of Effingham, 1643-1695* (Richmond, 1989): 51-51, 78; no author, "A True Narrative of the Rise, Progress, and Cessation of the Late Rebellion in Virginia, Most Humbly and Impartially Reported by his Majestyes Commissioners Appointed to Enquire into the Affaires of the Said Colony," in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 4 (1896), 2: 153.

fiery, and costly conflict ended in 1676 with Bacon's supporters returning to their farms, a few having met their ends by the hangman's noose. England attempted to tighten its control over affairs in Virginia, installing a series of governors they thought might pay greater attention to one of its most productive colonies, although their influence ranged between disinterested and complete ineffective.⁸⁴ The conflict also coincided with a dramatic increase in the importation of enslaved Africans into the colony over the two decades that followed, although the trend had started in the preceding years.⁸⁵ The passage of new laws by the elite merchant-planters, regulating the lives of enslaved Africans, followed in quick succession over the same period. In the end, the conflict may have provided the colony's leadership, consisting of a select group of intermarried, elite merchant-planters, with the opportunity to pass legislation that would further incentivize investment in enslaved laborers and move the colony towards a greater reliance on what they thought was a more controllable, more profitable, and somewhat more predictable labor system.

The quarter century that followed Bacon's Rebellion witnessed the colony's accelerated creation of a large underclass of enslaved human property. The existence

⁸⁴ Thomas Culpeper, 2nd Baron Culpeper of Thoresway, did not arrive in the colony to replace Berkeley until 1679, two years after he was appointed to lead the colony. His primary concern during his tenure as governor appear to be returning to England with as much of the colony's money as soon as possible. Francis Howard, 5th Baron Howard of Effingham, took a more active role, arriving in Virginia less than a year after his appointment in 1683. He assumed a very active role in managing the colony's affairs, although his attempts to raise fees and place himself as the beneficiary alienated many of the Virginia elite, particularly Lewis Burwell II's step-father, Philip Ludwell I. Howard had Ludwell removed from the Council, but after garnering support in England, Ludwell forced a reversal of Howard's decision, ultimately leading to Howard's governing from afar and leaving Lewis Burwell II's uncle-in-law, Nathaniel Bacon, the Elder, responsible for the governor's in-colony responsibilities, until Francis Nicholson's arrival. While serving initially as Lieutenant Governor, Nicholson's involvement would be a significant influence on Lewis Burwell II and the colony's elite.

⁸⁵ The presence of not insignificant numbers of enslaved Africans, and in some cases entire plantations populated by them rather than a mix with white indentured servants, decades before the rebellion decreases the level of influence Bacon's Rebellion had on slave and race relations in the colony. John C. Coombs, *Building "The Machine": The Development of Slavery and Slave Society in Early Colonial Virginia*, Ph.D. diss., The College of William and Mary, 2003: 98, 145.

of such a class elevated the lowest classes of propertied and non-propertied white males, using race and "otherness" to divide the majority of laborers in the colony and alleviating some of the tension they felt towards the elite by pitting them against one another. Settlement expanded westward in the aftermath of continued conflicts with Virginia Indians, temporarily alleviating demand for new lands while spreading thin an increasingly decentralized lower class. Lewis Burwell II took ownership of his estate and his future for the first time at this contentious moment and he took advantage of every opportunity that it provided him as a member of the colony's elite.⁸⁶

Despite its status as one of the better documented periods in Virginia history, there are few references to Lewis Burwell II in the many accounts of Bacon's Rebellion. It appears that, rather than involve himself in the conflict, Burwell focused on other matters, including the securing the economic stability of his family and expanding his agricultural enterprise, slowly increasing his involvement in colony-wide politics to match his expanding investments in land, labor, and positions of influence. There is little evidence that Burwell made any substantial contribution to Bacon's Rebellion, neither filing a claim for lost or damaged property nor receiving recognition in any of the altercations, battles, or subsequent suits. Lewis Burwell II's decisions, particularly his non-involvement, may have allowed him and his family to escape the violent social unrest that dominated his home county, including the

⁸⁶ Michael Leroy Oberg, ed., *Samuel Wiseman's Book of Record: The Official Account of Bacon's Rebellion in Virginia, 1676-1677* (Lanham, MD, 2005); Webb, 1676, *The End of American Independence*; Thomas Jefferson Wertenbaker, *Torchbearer of the Revolution: The Story of Bacon's Rebellion and its Leader* (Princeton, 1940); Wilcomb E. Washburn, *The Governor and the Rebel: A History of Bacon's Rebellion in Virginia* (Chapel Hill, 1957); Brent Tarter, "Bacon's Rebellion, the Grievances of the People, and the Political Culture of Seventeenth-Century Virginia" in *The Virginia Magazine of History & Biography* 119 (2011), 1: 1-41.

aftershocks of the 1680s tobacco cutting riots. This is not to say that he did not learn from the events transpiring around him. And perhaps his involvement simply went unnoticed in the surviving documents. But by the end of the century he emerged as one of the most influential and largest landholders in the colony. His step-father, Philip Ludwell I, chose a different path.

Philip Ludwell I's prominent role opposing Nathaniel Bacon and his rebellion included ardent support for Ludwell's cousin, Governor Berkeley, including leading the colony's militia in battle. At Berkeley's side during the governor's retreat to the Eastern Shore after Bacon's burning of Jamestown, Ludwell suffered the wrath of the rebel's army, losing substantial personal property to Bacon's mob. And while ultimately victorious, having survived the conflict and recovered some of what he lost, perhaps his greatest benefit was his marriage to Lady Berkeley in 1680. The widow Berkeley, having lost her husband during his return to England, married the 38-year-old Philip Ludwell I who had inherited his late brother's home plantation, Rich Neck, and other assets. They took control over late governor's estate as well, making the husband-and-wife team perhaps the wealthiest and most powerful couple in the colony. His power quickly expanded beyond Virginia, securing the governorship of the Carolinas and he eventually returned to England in 1694, living there until his death in 1714 at 72 years of age.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ no author, "Bacon's Rebellion – Philip Ludwell's Account" in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 1 (1893), 2: 178; John Harold Sprinkle, *Loyalists and Baconians: The Participants in Bacon's Rebellion in Virginia, 1676-1677*, Ph.D. diss., The College of William and Mary, 1992. See also John A. Garraty and Mark C. Carnes, *American National Biography* (New York, 1999); Dumas Malone, *Dictionary of American Biography*, 11 (London, 1933); John Raimo, *Biographical Directory of American Colonial and Revolutionary Governors, 1607-1789* (Westport, 1980).

Lewis Burwell II benefited from his association with Philip Ludwell I throughout his life. Their contrasting involvements in Bacon's Rebellion appears to be a microcosm of the two men's personalities, although they both achieved great success in the years that followed. Contemporaries more than step-father & son, their correspondence revealed a strong teacher/mentor relationship.⁸⁸ Contemporaries characterized the ambitious Philip Ludwell I as having a "rash and fiery temper," while Lewis Burwell II's actions reflected a decidedly understated character, his accomplishments at his estate speaking louder than any speech or political theatrics. Burwell's leadership, quiet and without great fanfare, came from his persistent focus on agriculture and the dramatic development of his plantation. He represented the ideal of the merchant-planter elite at a time of recovery, leading this class of families into a period of expanding territories, rapid economic prosperity for the elite, and radically shifting demographics across the colony.⁸⁹

Lewis Burwell II shared many aspects of his character with those of his peers at the end of the century. The elite merchant-planters owned tremendous amounts of land and possessed a variety of fine goods in sufficient numbers as to visually separate themselves from most of society. They controlled the political and legal world through their involvement with parish, county, and colony-wide leadership including control of the local vestries, the General Assembly, and the Governor's Council. Their role as merchant-planters reflected the importance of business and familial

⁸⁸ Extant letters from Burwell to Ludwell include those in the years 1702 and 1703, reprinted in Cecil Headlam, *Calendar of State Papers, America and West Indies, Vol. 22: 1704-1705* (London, 1916): 110 and no author, *Correspondence Received by the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations from the Governor of Virginia...*, CO 5/1314, 1704-1705.

⁸⁹ Philip Ludwell was excluded from the council in 1679; Sainsbury, W. Noel, John W. Fortescue, Cecil Headlam, and K.G. Davies, ed.s. *Calendar of State Papers: Colonial Series, Volume 10* (London, 1896): 188.

connections in England that facilitated the transport of goods back and forth across the Atlantic Ocean. They also shared a keen interest in specific recreational activities. In the mid-eighteenth century these included horse racing, cock fighting, and playing cards, many with precedents during Burwell's lifetime that connected these individuals socially and facilitated personal interactions beyond business. Looking at the activities of William Byrd II in the early eighteenth century as one example, the group participated in billiards, pleasure boating, and fine dinner events with music and games. There is specific evidence of Burwell's knowledge and likely participation in these tasks, William Byrd II's diary including references to numerous encounters with the extended Burwell family.⁹⁰ Increasingly exclusive to their class, these activities required a significant surplus of funds and time, were often unprofitable, and did not exist within the realm of life's necessities. These aspects, though, created the exclusivity that built bonds of shared experience between the merchant-planter elite.

As with any group, the individuals who constituted the merchant-planter elite shared certain traits and differed in others. Some came from established Virginia families that arrived in the colony during the first half of the seventeenth century, including Lewis Burwell II who traced his grandparent's involvement in the colony to its initial decades and his father's arrival to 1633.⁹¹ Others counted themselves among a later generation, born in the colony, whose parents arrived in the 1650s and 1660s

⁹⁰ Byrd's references to his many visits and shared experiences with Lewis Burwell II, and his sons Nathaniel and James "Jimmy" Burwell and their families, from 1709 through 1712 can be found in Louis Wright and Marion Tinling, eds., *The Secret Diary of William Byrd of Westover, 1709-1712* (Richmond, 1941).

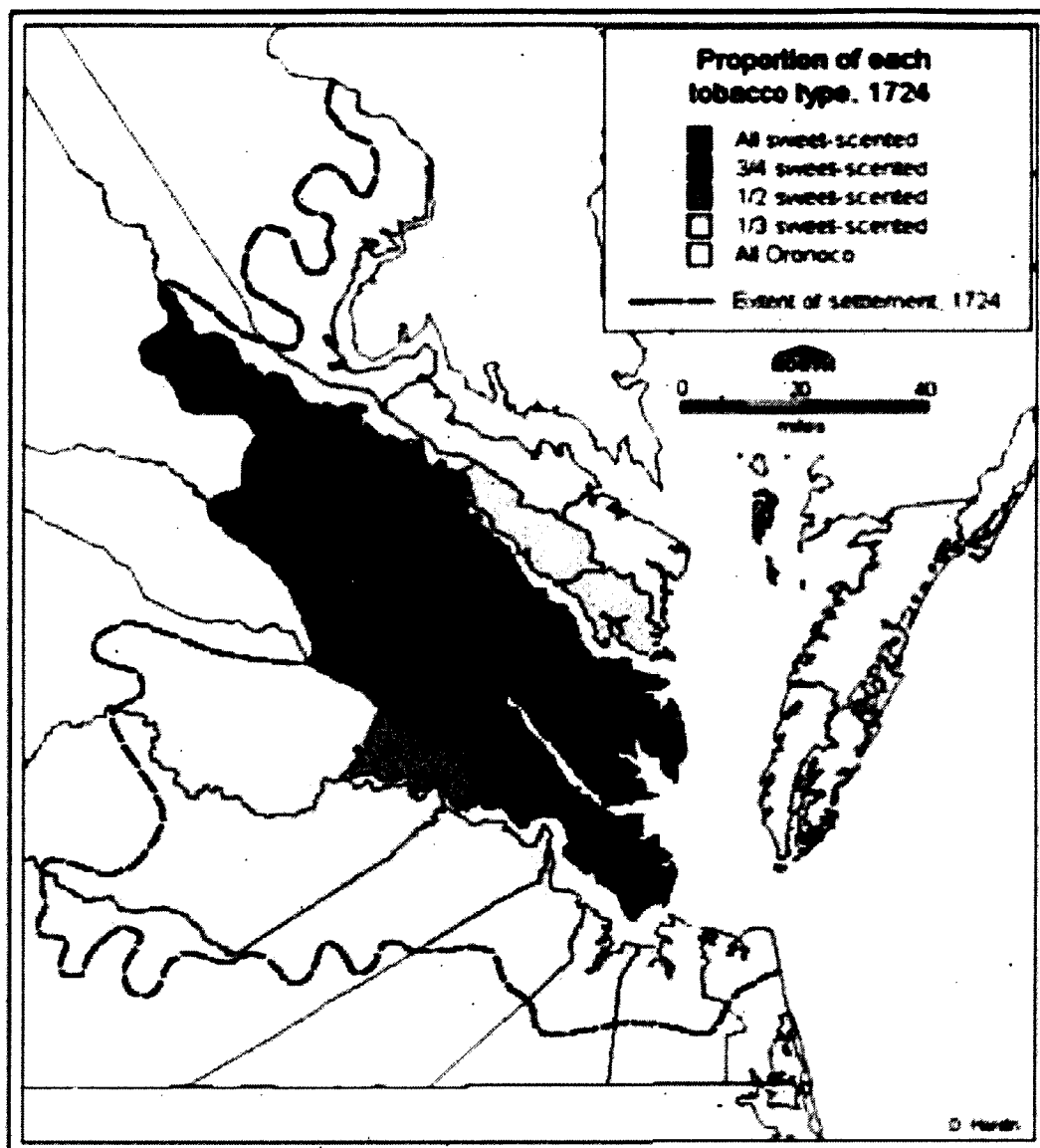
⁹¹ James Horn, *Adapting to a New World: English Society in the Seventeenth-Century Chesapeake* (Chapel Hill, 1996); Parker, *The Burwells of Kingsmill and Stoneland*, 3. See also, Blair, *The Rise of the Burwells*, 4, n. 18; William Lawson Grant, James Munro, and Almeric William Fitz Roy, eds., *Acts of the Privy Council, Colonial Series, 1613-1680* (Hereford, 1908): 211; no author, "Historical Notes and Queries," in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 2 (1895): 99.

when England endured the interregnum and the reign of Oliver Cromwell. This group included Lewis Burwell II's step-brother, Philip Ludwell II, their father/step-father arriving in the colony about 1660. Many of the merchant-planter elite possessed wealth, familial ties, and business connections that positioned them directly among the upper echelon of society from the very moment they set foot in Virginia.⁹²

The groups experienced the landscape with different personal histories. For instance, those whose families endured the first two or three generations of settlement possessed a greater cumulative knowledge of the Chesapeake region's physical setting. They witnessed the agricultural potential of its dark, rich, sandy soils and understood the peculiarities of planting tobacco and how this process, over years of cultivation, significantly reduced the fertility of the soil. The latter group, in contrast, possessed a stronger and more contemporary connection with England for the same reasons. Rather than drawing on memories of their grandparents or stories in books, they knew of their ancestral homeland through the experiences of their parents, or experienced it themselves as young children. And it was an England of the later seventeenth century, different from the England of Charles I and Charles II. A third group, consisting of recent adult immigrants, had first-hand knowledge of life in England and the most current understanding of everyday life in Europe, but no direct experience of life in Virginia.

All three groups drew on the experiences of their Virginia peers, most notably those living nearby or along the same major river or peninsula. While the colony's seventeenth-century narrative often focuses on the coastal plain geographic province,

⁹² Edmund Jennings Lee, *Lee of Virginia, 1642-1892; Biographical and Genealogical Sketches of the Descendants of Colonel Richard Lee* (Baltimore, 1974): 128.



Predominant tobacco growing regions in 1724.
Hardin, "The same sort of seed in different Earths," 141.

translating roughly to the area of twenty-first century Virginia east of U.S. Interstate 95, there are significant sub-regions that, during this period, developed different cash crops in response to different elements in their physical setting, specifically their soils. The regions roughly follow the colony's three peninsulas, its "Southside," and the Eastern Shore. The Northern Neck's soil was best suited for Oronoco tobacco, while

the Middle Peninsula's and Lower Peninsula's soil better suited the newer, sweet-scented tobacco which became popular in foreign markets after the 1640s. The Southside's soils failed to produce comparable tobacco yields of either type on the northern three peninsulas and planters shifted their efforts to producing provisions and naval stores for the West Indies, New England, and after 1670, the Carolinas. The Eastern Shore most closely matched the soils of the Northern Neck and planters followed suit for much of the seventeenth century, shifting to corn and wheat early in the eighteenth century, especially in the upper region, and to provisioning and naval stores for foreign markets even earlier, specifically in the lower region.⁹³ An effective planter of any status level understood the suitability of certain crops in certain sub-regions of the Chesapeake and this translated into a shared sense of knowledge between the residents of these areas.

Experience with the physical environment of Virginia, whether derived from the stories of ancestors, the recent successes and failures of neighbors, or one's own history, clearly influenced future actions and attitudes. The literate few could add to their influences pamphlets and books that introduced ideas about agriculture, architecture, religion, literature, and appropriate elite behavior of both past and recent vintage. The point of discussing these influences, and specifically the origins of ideas among the colony's elite, is to better understand inspiration, creativity, and the drive to experiment with how a merchant-planter and their family should live. The questions of "how" and "why did the elite introduce new ways of acting within and seeing the landscape" cannot be answered by finding a print in an architectural treatise or

⁹³ Lorena S. Walsh, *Motives of Honor, Pleasure, & Profit: Plantation Management in the Colonial Chesapeake, 1607-1763* (Chapel Hill, 2010): 147-150, 189, 298.

matching a woodcut or a philosopher's poem with the reconstructed image of a plantation. Rather, the scholar's goal should be to understand the process by which the merchant-planter elite, as well as enslaved Africans, middling planters, and others, developed their view of the world around them and attempted to change it to suit their needs.

One example to consider is the elite merchant-planter's visit to the plantation of a peer. It is not unreasonable to surmise the basic events of a visit, including the initial arrival on the property, walking the grounds, enjoying a meal, a conversation, and perhaps staying the night. The diaries of William Byrd II provide a convenient perspective on this practice. Over a series of days and nights in early November 1709, Byrd spent time with the Burwell family. His visit began on the 4th when he "dined with Lewis Burwell II at King's Creek [Plantation] and they talked and sat until about ten in the evening," the property serving as Burwell's primary residence for several years at that point. "About three in the afternoon" the following day, Byrd "went across the river to visit Burwells" at Fairfield Plantation, now the primary residence of Lewis Burwell II's son, Nathaniel, and his wife Elizabeth Carter Burwell. Byrd wrote "Arriving about two hours later," they had supper together and in the evening they "talked over a couple of bottles of French claret" and Byrd and his wife remained the evening. The visit continued on the 6th when the two couples went to Abingdon Parish to hear a sermon from Parson Smith, meeting the Berkeleys who later joined them that day at Fairfield and, over a late meal and much drink Byrd told an "abundance of lies by way of diversion." The visit continued for two more days, including a boat trip to

Gloucester Town at Gloucester Point, an altercation with privateers, and a roast beef dinner.

The landscape appears to sit quietly in the background. This is partly a result of it being commonplace, but also a reflection of its acceptance within the world of the elite writing in their diaries. The landscape is an active player, though, framing each encounter, whether on land or on water, in the day light or under the moonlight (or beside the candle light), within sight of the enslaved or in the house of God. Consider the histories of these properties. Many of the elite merchant-planters of late seventeenth-century Virginia grew up on, or had substantial experience with, the plantations they now considered home. The cultivation of tobacco or another cash crop could have started even earlier, perhaps under a previous owner, before construction of the manor house. This administrative center of the plantation likely consisted of a small group of frame buildings surrounding the manor house, the most impressive of the lot, perhaps raised overtop brick-walled cellars, flanked by brick end chimneys. The complex was intersected by roads and abutted by agricultural fields.

This landscape looked very different from its initial settlement. The timbering of trees for fuel and to clear space for planting tobacco resulted in the removal of many visual barriers, leaving neighboring farmsteads like islands of buildings among a sea of tobacco plants, with ravines cutting into the ground, leading to creeks and rivers that bounded each landform. Accounts from the eighteenth century of travelers watching ships in the Mobjack Bay to the east from the vantage point of Seawell's Ordinary, just a short distance east of Fairfield plantation, highlights the extensive deforestation of at least this part of Abingdon Parish in Gloucester County. A

reconstruction of the land patents surrounding Fairfield plantation in the seventeenth century provides some insight into the frequency and placement of these "islands" although it is only a partial picture as the presence or absence of satellite quarters or tenant farms within the plantation's boundaries remain unrepresented.⁹⁴

Through the landscapes they created, people demonstrated their knowledge and ability, communicated their likes and dislikes, and stated what they found acceptable, for both the colony and the world beyond. The act of creating designed landscapes out of the "natural" environment, or from the agricultural fields of a previous owner, strengthened class cohesion through emulation, imitation, and innovation, all byproducts of these experiences.⁹⁵ These actions helped produce an increasingly well connected and generally homogenous merchant-planter elite who actively and visibly separated themselves from the rest of society through new expressions of architecture, landscape, and material culture. In addition, their personal preferences, individual experiences, and innovative adaptations to the non-English world of the Chesapeake Bay established a distinctly regional group identity that set precedent for the families of Virginia's ruling class through the eighteenth century. Lewis Burwell II facilitated these developments. As a leader within his class, and on the backs of the enslaved Africans he owned, he actively pursued and promoted this ideal his designed landscape. And while the documents that record his inner thoughts

⁹⁴ References to the "church quarter" and "old quarter" near the orchard suggest the presence of these domestic areas, but their exact locations remain unknown and await eventual identification through archaeological survey. William P. Palmer, Sherwin McRae, Raleigh E. Colston, and Henry W. Flournoy, eds., *Calendar of Virginia State Papers and Other Manuscripts...Preserved...at Richmond, 1652-1869*, Volume I (Richmond, 1875-93): 299-300; Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, 215.

⁹⁵ The term "natural" in this case is not intended to infer that the landscape was unaltered or unaffected by humans past or present, but rather seen as such by the dominant English cultures, and perhaps by the foreign African cultures, that interacted with it most during the period of study.

on these issues do not survive, the physical evidence of his landscape stands as witness to his actions and their effects on the colony.

Neither Lewis Burwell II's politically astute step-fathers' nor his own family's expanding fortune could guarantee his position among the colonial elite, although they did not hurt his efforts. Elevating and maintaining his status required more than money and familial resources. He needed specific physical manifestations of wealth, symbols accepted and appreciated by his peers. According to historian T.H. Breen, "in public these men determined social standing not by a man's religiosity or philosophic knowledge but by his visible estate – his lands, slaves, buildings, even by the quality of his garments." Of these, numbers mattered most, but quality played an important role when peers visited, experiencing the landscape and remembering it, perhaps sharing it with others through their own eyes.⁹⁶

Despite reaching majority (21 years old) and marrying Abigail Smith earlier that decade, Lewis Burwell II did not assume full control of his father's plantation until after his mother's death in 1676 and Philip Ludwell I's departure to Rich Neck plantation after his marriage to the governor's widow, Frances Berkeley. In complete control of the estate for the first time in his life, Lewis Burwell II embraced the lessons learned while assisting Ludwell with the day-to-day affairs of Fairfield plantation. This prepared him for the efficient management and expansion of his holdings throughout the colony and for the tasks required of a member of government, both locally and colony-wide.⁹⁷

⁹⁶ T.H. Breen, *Puritans and Adventurers: Change and Persistence in Early America* (New York, 1980): 153.

⁹⁷ Not only did he learn from Philip Ludwell, but his step-uncle, Thomas Ludwell, Philip's older brother and Secretary of the Colony, resided at Rich Neck plantation in James City County near the future site

Lewis Burwell II understood that to achieve and maintain his position as a member of Virginia's gentry it was imperative that he surround himself with the symbols of status that would legitimize his position. Marriage into other prominent families made this easier, both in the wealth the couple would share and the role she and he played in representing their family in colonial society. An ideal wife would bring with her significant resources, such as a dower of land, the fittings of a genteel household, and significant contacts through her extended family in the colony and in England. Abigail Smith likely brought all of this to her marriage. Born in Colchester, Essex, she was the daughter of Anthony Smith, tanner, of Colchester, Essex and his wife Martha, daughter of Rev. James Bacon, Rector of Burgate, Suffolk. She was also second cousin to Nathaniel Bacon, the rebel, and great, great, grand-daughter of James Bacon, Alderman of London, who was a brother of Sir Nicholas Bacon, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, and uncle of Francis Bacon, Viscount St. Albans, Lord High Chancellor of England.⁹⁸ With the compliment of her pedigree, she and her husband ascended to the highest ranks of Virginia's elite. Without her, and without the inheritance from her uncle, Nathaniel Bacon the Elder, the couples' future would have been far less certain.

As executor of Nathaniel Bacon the Elder's estate, Lewis Burwell II suddenly controlled numerous established plantations and the enslaved Africans working on each. The survival of York County's court records, including inventories, wills, probates, and legal cases, permits our knowing the names, values, and sometimes ages

of Williamsburg. The plantation contained one of Virginia's most complex and well designed manor homes, surrounded by a brick kitchen and multiple dependencies and quarters and will be discussed in more detail later in the dissertation. Philip later resided at Rich Neck and likely expanded the complex with his second wife, Lady Berkeley.

⁹⁸ Bernard Burke, *A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Colonial Gentry* (Baltimore, 1970).

and occupations of many of the enslaved Africans on Bacon's plantations in the county. This helped confirm Bacon's wealth, status, and attitude towards plantation management, but it also recorded Lewis Burwell II's involvement in Bacon's accounts, his experience in settling the estate, and his following in his uncle-in-law's footsteps. While this sudden and significant expansion of Burwell's enslaved labor force greatly affected his agricultural and economic capabilities, land ownership remained a more prominent symbol of status in seventeenth-century Virginia. In this instance, inheriting Bacon's estate more than doubled his own landholdings.⁹⁹ Administration of this complex series of properties and laborers brought with it many challenges, but also many benefits, including plantations across four counties, specifically Isle of Wight, Nansemond, New Kent, and his home county, York, which included parcels in both Hampton and Bruton Parish, the latter being his home plantation on King's Creek. Simply owning any amount of land elevated status, but owning thousands of acres elevated him to the highest levels of society.

Land acquisition in the colony primarily occurred through one of three methods: headrights, purchase, or inheritance. In the seventeenth century, property owners in Virginia's eastern counties frequently acquired land through the first option. As part of a land patent, a "headright" of fifty acres resulted from the transport of each person brought over from England, including the patentee.¹⁰⁰ Law required improvement of the land within three years' time or it would revert to the crown.

⁹⁹ YCDOW 1691-1694, IX: 116-117. Historian John Blair's assessment of Bacon's estate as doubling Lewis Burwell's wealth at the same time testifies to the already substantial landholdings under Burwell's control; Blair, *The Rise of the Burwells*, 20.

¹⁰⁰ David A. Brown, *To the Place Where it Began: Seventeenth-Century Settlement Patterns in Abingdon Parish, Gloucester County, Virginia: History, GIS, and Archaeology*. M.A. thesis, University of Massachusetts Boston, 2001: 16.

Lewis Burwell I realized the importance of land ownership, patenting over 5,000 acres within his lifetime.¹⁰¹

The wealthy controlled the division, surveying, and documentation (as well as enforcement of violations) associated with all transactions, often taking advantage of the process, investing in land for speculative reasons with no intent to develop it. At the end of the seventeenth century they possessed the resources and labor, including increasing numbers of enslaved Africans, to settle frontier counties and develop portions of their land for satellite plantations while renting or selling the remaining land to immigrants and newly freed indentured servants. A select few among the elite acquired proprietorships consisting of tens of thousands of acres, most often given to select individuals in England and settled by family members or agents in Virginia.¹⁰² The result was the same, though, regardless of whether the owner lived on one side of the Atlantic or the other. Land was a commodity, an asset that provided opportunities for the wealthy to accumulate greater riches for themselves and their families.

Compared to England land was relatively inexpensive. More important, it was abundant and accessible. The gentry frequently acquired large tracts of five hundred or more acres through patent, through marriage, or through inheritance. The largest tracts appeared along the frontier, but the purchase of smaller acreages, combined with existing plantations or for further speculative reasons, continued into the eighteenth century. In the case of Lewis Burwell II, he accumulated landholdings every way he could. His inheritance of Nathaniel Bacon the Elder's property through his wife's

¹⁰¹ Mason, *Records of Colonial Gloucester County*, 15.

¹⁰² Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*. Volumes 4 and 5 of this series focus predominantly on Virginia's Northern Neck region, a proprietorship of Lord Fairfax who sold the land through various agents in Virginia, including Robert "King" Carter.

estate formed the largest single infusion of wealth, trumping even the substantial inheritance from his father. By 1704 Lewis Burwell II owned 26,650 acres of land across seven counties, including Fairfield plantation, expanded to 3,300 acres, in Gloucester County.¹⁰³

Lewis Burwell II and his fellow merchant-planters worked with relatives and overseers to maintain communication with and control over their extensive landholdings and expanding labor force. Responsible for the efficient planting, maintenance, and harvesting of crops, overseers often came from the ranks of experienced farmers or recently freed indentured servants. The earliest overseer of record for the Burwell property in Gloucester was Mr. John Gregory, referred to in 1677 as "Capt. Ludwells overseer" in the settlement of accounts for estates in Gloucester County with York County merchant Jonathan Newell.¹⁰⁴ Their responsibilities included preparation of a crop for planting, harvest, and sale, loading it on ships for delivery to the tobacco inspection warehouse and, later, to England. They also served as the property owner's proxy in relations with both indentured servants and enslaved laborers, managing the operations of a specific quarter or plantation, or sometimes multiple plantations. As landholdings grew, sons and in-laws managed related plantations, shared agents in England, and combined their crops to reduce shipping costs by using fewer vessels.

Lewis Burwell II owned an interest in a handful of ships, including the *Gloucester* and the *Martha of Virginia*, but also relied on others to transport his

¹⁰³ Louis Des Cognets, Jr., comp., *English Duplicates of Lost Virginia Records* (Princeton, 1958): 147; Blair, *The Rise of the Burwells*, 32.

¹⁰⁴ Jonathan Newell's Accounts, 1677, York County Order Book 6 (transcript), 145-147, reproduced in Billings, *The Old Dominion in the Seventeenth Century*, 203.

crops.¹⁰⁵ Tenant farmers, middling planters, and others living nearby were equally essential to the success of this trans-Atlantic shipping system. Assuming a similar role as his contemporaries, Lewis Burwell II likely transported the harvest of his neighbors while taking orders for goods to import from England. In their roles as merchants, the gentry often extended lines of credit, formalizing an economic relationship that further strengthened social connections among those living in close proximity. The relationship legitimized the positions of the elite as political and economic leaders in the colony, Lewis Burwell II likely providing opportunities for his neighbors, as his peers did, often in exchange for his neighbors' support in county elections. This relationship may have also led to the development of an informal market of local manufactures, including soap, butter, cheese, and other cottage industry products, complimenting those he may have manufactured on his own plantation, although no records of this survive.¹⁰⁶

Lewis Burwell II's primary market was England, though. He came from a distinguished family tied to prominent merchants in London.¹⁰⁷ Locally, Burwell established connections with Jonathan Walke, a merchant involved in the North American coastal trade that brought enslaved Africans from Africa through the

¹⁰⁵ Des Cognets, Jr., *English Duplicates of Lost Virginia Records*, 292, 313.

¹⁰⁶ There is evidence for a relatively strong investment in local markets during the mid-to-late eighteenth century within the surviving account books for related Burwell family plantation on the lower peninsula, specifically Carter's Grove. Whether the timeliness of this investment reflects the conditions of the local economy at that time, or is reflective of a longstanding investment established during the period of the current study, is unknown. Walsh, *From Calabar to Carter's Grove*, 126-127, 131.

¹⁰⁷ Generally, see Martin H. Quitt, "The Immigrant Origins of the Virginia Gentry: A Study of Cultural Transmission and Innovation" in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd. ser., 45 (1988): 632-33, 641. See also, Coombs, *Building "The Machine,"* 193.

Caribbean while shipping provisions and other raw materials to the islands.¹⁰⁸ Along with his friends and fellow Walke clients, including Nathaniel Bacon the Elder, William Byrd II, and Benjamin Harrison, it is likely that Burwell participated to some degree in the coastal trade. Burwell possessed the business acumen to participate in the trade, as well as the laborers and land necessary to produce goods for export other than tobacco, including plantations on the south side that were better suited for producing provisions and naval stores for plantations in the Caribbean.¹⁰⁹ For some gentry, this type of trade established connections beyond England, providing access to new markets and goods.

Communication between members of the elite and those beneath them resulted in benefits for each participant regardless of their status. But these benefits were not equal and did not ensure empathy between participants. For the elite, it was greed and aggressiveness more than gentility that drove their involvement in significant local, regional, and international markets, and "these men and their contemporaries were perhaps less concerned with improving their quality of life than consolidating their hard-won ascendancy by acquiring land, laborers, and offices."¹¹⁰ The size and breadth of Lewis Burwell II's total landholdings serve as one example of this pursuit of nearly incomprehensible wealth. A middling planter's estate averaged between 100 and 200 acres at the end of the seventeenth century. The majority of these people and their families spent most of their lives within a roughly three-to-five-mile radius from their

¹⁰⁸ William Byrd to Jonathan Walke, 29 May 1689, in Tinling, *The Correspondence of the Three William Byrds*, Volume I, 104; T.70/276 f. 57, VCRP microfilm, reel no. 802. See also, Coombs, *Building "The Machine,"* 63.

¹⁰⁹ Coombs, *Building "The Machine,"* 60-61.

¹¹⁰ Bernard Bailyn, "Politics and Social Structure," in James M. Smith, ed., *Seventeenth-Century America: Essays in Colonial History* (Chapel Hill, 1959): 22-23.

home.¹¹¹ Lewis Burwell II's landholdings were over three times the size of their world and spread from New Kent County in the west and Northumberland County in the north to Isle of Wight County in the south and Accomack County to the east.¹¹²

When communicating status to peers, it was not necessary for the elite merchant-planters to exhibit the full extent of their landed estate for others to appreciate its value. While only a single piece of paper, a deed, in its form as the written title to land, communicated ownership and as a piece of material culture, created by people and understood by Burwell's peer group, neighboring middling planters, and even illiterate tenants and day laborers who aspired to land ownership, symbolically represented the property, its current value, and its future potential. These documents, and the plats that occasionally accompanied them, might be displayed in the manor house for visitors to appreciate, promoting the wealth and status of the property owner in lieu of a tour of the plantation. As part of the property owner's library, these documents connected control over land with the pursuit of knowledge, the understanding of history, and the appreciation of high culture. And while the full extent of an individual's landholdings might rely on visitors understanding the meaning of a few words and drawings on a series of pages, the experience of being within the home plantation became the primary means by which friends, neighbors,

¹¹¹ Lois Green Carr, Russell R. Menard, and Lorena S. Walsh, *Robert Cole's World: Agriculture and Society in Early Maryland* (Chapel Hill, 1991): 137-142. The authors' data focuses on the study of one specific area in Maryland, but through their research in other regions, believe that this is generally suitable across the coastal plain of Virginia and Maryland during the mid-to-late seventeenth century.

¹¹² New Kent: Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, Volume II, 7; Northumberland: Blair, *The Rise of the Burwells*, 6; Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, Volume I, 199; Isle of Wight: YCDOW 1691-1694, IX: 116-117; Accomack: Susie M. Ames, ed., *County Court Records of Accomack-Northampton, Virginia, 1640-1645* (Richmond, 1973): 53-54; see also Des Cognets, Jr., *English Duplicates of Lost Virginia Records*, 123-232. There are 43,560 square feet in an acre. Lewis Burwell II owned more than 10,000 acres, or 435,600,000 square feet of property. There are 78.5 square miles in a five mile radius (world of a middling planter) and 27,878,400 square feet in a square mile, equaling 139,392,000 square feet in five square miles. Using this reasoning, Lewis Burwell II owned enough land to encompass 3.125 of these "worlds."

laborers, and others might judge status. Lewis Burwell II embraced this notion and, along with many of his peers, invested heavily in both his home plantation and its manor house and immediate surroundings, part of a greater message to any and all who stepped foot in his domain.

Lewis Burwell II's father's estate started Fairfield plantation with an initial 2,350-acre patent that later expanded to 3,200 acres in 1654 and eventually 3,400 acres by 1680.¹¹³ The largest property in Abingdon Parish, it ranked second within Gloucester County.¹¹⁴ The York River was not the primary access to the plantation's formal and administrative center, but rather the waterway known both as Rosewell Creek and Carter Creek that extended perpendicular from that major drainage. The creek included a protected harbor (Carter Bay) and while Minniffee (and later Page) family property flanked the mouth, the waterway extended more than a mile inland and provided sufficient water-based access to make transporting tobacco to larger ships via shallow barges feasible.¹¹⁵ Both manor houses, including the one lived in by Lucy and her husbands and the one constructed by Lewis Burwell II, stood at the turn in the creek, providing a potential vista straight from Carter Bay to the plantation, thirty feet above.

Equally important as the water access and the view from the river was the plantation's landward approach. Lewis Burwell II's property extended far enough to the east to border and partially absorb significant portions of "the Great Roade," the

¹¹³ Mason, *Records of Colonial Gloucester County*, Volume II, 15.

¹¹⁴ Captain Armistead owned the only larger estate at 3,675 acres in Kingston Parish (later Mathews County). See York County Project Files "1704RR" and Des Cognets, Jr., *English Duplicates of Lost Virginia Records*, 123-232.

¹¹⁵ Rachel Most, ed., *Discovering Rosewell: An Historical, Architectural and Archaeological Overview* (Gloucester, 1994).

Virginia Indian path along the edge of a substantial promontory that early settlers converted into the primary thoroughfare extending through Gloucester County.¹¹⁶ The parish church bordered the eastern edge of the property, the county courts a short distance to the north, and the primary county port, tobacco inspection station and warehouse a short distance to the south at Gloucester Point. The largely flat, elevated tract encompassed a sizeable portion of the Piney Swamp, but as a total percentage of the acreage it was relatively minor.

The property's primary assets included its location within the colony, its accessibility to a variety of transportation routes, and its prime agricultural land. These characteristics may have trumped any desire for river-front access. Each re-patent expanded the property north and east, further into the county's interior and away from Lewis Burwell II's formal and administrative building complex. This reflected his pursuit of underdeveloped agricultural land and an inclination towards control over interior acreage and transportation networks. Neighboring elite, namely the Page family, also influenced Burwell's expansion, though, as they acquired additional lands to the west and retained the first mile back from the York River as their own.

Lewis Burwell II's expansion of the size and economic potential of his family seat paralleled his efforts to legitimize and sustain his political power in society. Holding any of a myriad of political offices brought with it unique responsibilities ranging from representing the county in the legislature, collecting import duties, or maintaining roads and bridges. It also benefitted the officeholder through the collection of lucrative fees and the opportunity to establish exclusive connections with

¹¹⁶ Brown, *To the Place Where it Began*; see also, C. Wiley Poag, *Chesapeake Invader: Discovering America's Giant Meteorite Crater* (Princeton, 1999).

merchants and other members of higher social standing. Lower level offices, such as surveyor of roads or sheriff, served as steps to more powerful political positions such as justice of the peace, leader of the militia, or member of the House of Burgesses, which required election rather than political appointment. Offices grew in power and prestige, but also competition, from the parish to the county and finally to the colony-wide level. Burwell likely followed this path of political ascension, although most documentation relates to his holding the highest position in the colony: a member of the Council of State.

The speed of political ascension depended largely on the wealth of the family, but could also depend on competition among qualified applicants and, as the seventeenth century grew to a close, fewer openings due to longer life spans and less frequent turnover. Some planters never ascended beyond mid-level positions, such as county surveyors, sheriffs, comptrollers of the rivers, and other functionaries, but even these offices could produce a steady and lucrative collection of fees, sustaining a family and perhaps insuring higher office for the family's next generation. By the end of the century, a reasonable expectation for many within the upper class of Virginia planters would be to climb the political ladder slowly, a generation for each rung (parish, county, burgess, council member). These rules did not appear to apply to Lewis Burwell II, his path nearly predestined, established by a family already well along this journey from the colony's earliest years.

The surviving documents relating to the early political positions held by Lewis Burwell II are frustratingly scant. Rather than knowing for certain that he served as a vestryman in Abingdon Parish, as a justice of the peace, or a sheriff in Gloucester

County, any accounting of these office holders remain missing. It is reasonable to assume that he held some or even all of these positions, though, as he participated in colony-wide politics at least as early as 1690. A Major in the county militia by 1680, his next documented political role came in 1690 when Governor Francis Nicholson authorized the “building & endowing of a free school & colledge,” and appointed Burwell, among others, to “procure as many Subscriptions gratuities & benevolences as you can within this Colony of Virginia towards the defraying the charge of the sd buildings...”.¹¹⁷ Soon thereafter, Burwell numbered among the various elite members of colonial society to sign a document pledging money towards the building of the college “for the good Example of others...”¹¹⁸

Lewis Burwell II's involvement in planning and supporting the college clearly illustrates he valued education, whether in Europe or the colony, and likely believed it helped define him and his class. While originally established to train young men as Episcopal ministers, the College of William and Mary would be more successful teaching reading, writing, romance languages, classical learning, and law to the sons of Virginia's gentry. Burwell's generation decided that these skills would define their sons and the next generation of elite gentleman whether his peer group possessed any of this knowledge or not. Some of his contemporaries received an education in England or possibly with a tutor in Virginia, but references of this in historic documents are rare even for elite families and no evidence survives to connect Burwell with either learning option. Burwell likely received his education at the hands of a

¹¹⁷ Mason, *Records of Colonial Gloucester County*, Volume II, 15. See also, Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, Volume II, 215; Blair, *The Rise of the Burwells*, 20; “Papers Relating to the Founding of the College” in *The William and Mary Quarterly* 7 (1899), 3: 159-160.

¹¹⁸ Blair, *The Rise of the Burwells*, 20; “Papers Relating to the Founding of the College,” 160-161.

tutor and possibly directly from his step-fathers Bernard and Ludwell. The court case in which he joined Lewis Griffin against Ralph Wormeley for John Burnham's land lists Burwell as the lawyer for the defense. Years of litigation related to this case documents both his commitment to winning and his experience in legal matters, highlighting his knowledge of English law.¹¹⁹ But whether self taught or privately educated, he supported educational initiatives throughout his life.¹²⁰

The most curious absence in Burwell's political record is the office most frequently associated with the merchant-planter elite. No evidence exists for Burwell as a Burgess, whether in Gloucester County or any other county.¹²¹ While not unprecedented, it was common to spend time representing one's county in the House of Burgesses prior to nomination to the Governor's Council, a position he held twice in his lifetime. The Council assigned him other responsibilities, though. On April 16th, 1691 they appointed him one of the people responsible for selling non-military goods, confiscated from the ships *Experiment* and *Wolfe*, specifically "all that shall not be thought Convenient to be Shipt for England, for good and acceptable bills of

¹¹⁹ H.R. McIlwaine, ed., *Executive Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia*, Volume I, (11 June 1680 - 22 June 1699) (Richmond, 1925): 492. Appeals were carried beyond the county court to the general court, but no ruling survived. It is presumed that Griffin and Burwell won the case; Blair, *The Rise of the Burwells*, 15-19. See also no author, "The Randolph Manuscript: Griffin and Burwell vs. Wormeley in the General Court of Virginia, 1681 (Part 1)," in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 18 (1910), 2: 129-139.

¹²⁰ Hunter Dickinson Farish, ed., *Journals and Letters of Philip Vickers Fithian, 1773-1774: A Plantation Tutor of the Old Dominion* (Williamsburg, VA, 1957). Lewis Burwell II continued to support education throughout his life, leaving a bequest in his will and insisting that his sons attend school, in particular his youngest son, Lewis Burwell III. York County, Deeds and Bonds, Book 2: 370-1.

¹²¹ During the most likely period of Burwell's involvement in politics (c. 1680-1710), the Burgess seats are known to have been occupied by the following individuals representing Gloucester County: Col. John Armistead (1680-1686), Col. Matthew Kemp (1680-1686), Major Henry Whiting (1682-1684), John Buckner Sr. (1682-1693), Thomas Pate (1684), John Smith (1685-1692), Lawrence Smith (1688-1734), John Baylor (1692), Capt. James Ransone (1692-1706), Mordecai Cooke (1696-1714), Thomas Buckner (1698-1718), and Peter Beverley (1700-1714). Although there are gaps, it would be remarkable for someone with the stature of Burwell to escape mention in all of the various political and personal papers that survive. Mason, *Records of Colonial Gloucester County*, Volume I, 120.

Exchange."¹²² As he dealt with occasional assignments from the Council, he remained involved in local politics, whether through his militia duties or his leadership with the parish church, donating a portion of the silver in 1703.¹²³ It is tempting to hypothesize that Burwell's wealth and status elevated him beyond the level of a Burgess or similar position in politics, ranking him among those who helped select future members of the representative body, allowing him to take on responsibilities when he chose to.

Land, political position, familial connections and the wealth to make all three assets productive established and maintained Lewis Burwell II's status at the pinnacle of colonial society. These assets, skills, and an adherence to certain ideals distinguished him and his peers from the rest of society. An "extreme emphasis upon personal independence" existed at the heart of the group.¹²⁴ This established a personal identity and reputation for elite merchant-planters within society at the end of the century. Competition, a familiar element of everyday life for the elite, further defined their lives, but operated in its most beneficial form when within the prescribed circle of friends, peers, and family members; in contrast, cooperation sustained the group as a whole, isolating it from outside groups.¹²⁵ This largely native-born generation possessed a natural bond that separated them from the newer immigrant elite at the end of the seventeenth century. The plantations and profits of Lewis Burwell II and the merchant-planter elite provided sufficient security and confidence to take risks

¹²² H.R. McIlwaine, ed., *Executive Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia*, Volume I, (11 June 1680 - 22 June 1699) (Richmond, 1925): 171.

¹²³ Later generations would continue the trend. Lewis I/II (1716-1756) and II/II (1737-1779) were both justices of the peace for the county and represented Gloucester in the House of Burgesses, serving on the committees for religion, courts of justice, and propositions and grievances. Mason, *Records of Colonial Gloucester County*, Volume II, 120-122; Blair, *The Rise of the Burwells*, 5.

¹²⁴ Breen, *Puritans and Adventurers*, 152.

¹²⁵ *ibid.*, 150.

while significantly reducing the effects of the hardships that befell many of the middling and lower status planters. At the same time, the creation of a collective identity further heightened the exclusivity of this class, as membership became increasingly limited to fewer and fewer families and intermarriage between families increased, widening the economic and social gap in Virginia society.

Confidence and security, along with a desire to establish their own identity and define themselves in comparison to their peers in the colony and abroad, led to experimentation with and investment in expressing knowledge, wealth, and control over others while expanding their plantations and increasing their enslaved labor force. Designed landscapes built on this momentum and provided an avenue for the elite to demonstrate their sophistication. Inspired by the fashionable elements of new buildings and gardens seen on the plantations of their peers, and perhaps a rare pattern book or illustration observed in a book borrowed from a friend's library, the elite pursued the physical construction and grand expression of knowledge, power, and individual identity through their manor houses and the setting that surrounded them at the end of the seventeenth century. These designed landscapes emerged at the same time merchant-planters expanded investment in infrastructure improvements and the construction of increasing numbers of masonry-built homes. But none of these developments would have been possible without the presence and significant influence of an expanding enslaved African workforce.

The next chapter addresses the lives of the enslaved Africans who built, maintained, and expanded nearly every element of Lewis Burwell II's plantation enterprise. Starting in the second half of the seventeenth century, enslaved Africans

gradually replaced indentured servants and most other laborers of European descent on plantations. They became increasingly involved in every aspect of everyday life on the plantation, from agriculture to domestic roles, forcing their owners to reconcile their identity as both property and human beings. Very few documents survive relating to the lives of enslaved Africans on late seventeenth-century plantations and Fairfield is no exception. In fact, the most significant line of evidence for the lives of those who lived and worked on this plantation exists in the excavated archaeological material. Through a thorough analysis of this data and the extant documents, contextualized within current understanding of their lives, we will analyze the enslaved population of the plantation following their survival of the Middle Passage, having created and sustained a sense of self and community despite their abduction, sale, and transport into a new world, forced to labor for the profits of others.

Chapter 3: Enslaved Africans Building a Black Landscape at Fairfield Plantation

"Building, then, is a process that is continually going on, for as long as people dwell in an environment. It does not begin here, with a pre-formed plan, and end there, with a finished artefact. The 'final form' is but a fleeting moment in the life of any feature..."¹²⁶

The death of Nathaniel Bacon the elder in 1692 set forth a series of events that elevated the political position and social standing of Lewis Burwell II and his family. It also affected the lives of many others. Bacon owned more than 39 enslaved Africans divided among multiple plantations.¹²⁷ Legally, Lewis Burwell II now controlled their labor, their possessions, and their future. His plans would determine where they lived, who they lived with, and their primary work, whether growing tobacco, repairing buildings and fences, or participating in other tasks towards the benefit of their owner. It is likely that many of Bacon's enslaved Africans went about the same daily routine established before his death, perhaps unaware for some time of their owner's passing. Others, though, in particular those with specific carpentry or artisan skills, likely found their world immediately turned on its head.

The potential ramifications of this transfer of ownership of human property cannot be overstated, especially within a colony quickly redefining the role of enslaved Africans in society. This inherited group became part of Burwell's labor force spread across several plantations. Over the next decade these enslaved workers would largely be responsible for the labor necessary to build, maintain, and expand nearly every element of Lewis Burwell II's plantation enterprise. This chapter

¹²⁶ Ingold, *The Perception of the Environment*, 188.

¹²⁷ Will and Inventory of Nathaniel Bacon the elder (15 March 1691/2), YCDOW, and no author, "The Randolph Manuscript: Griffin and Burwell vs. Wormeley in the General Court of Virginia, 1681 (Part 1)," in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 18 (1910), 2: 129-139. Wills, 9: f. 116 (will) and 274-277 (inventory); see also Walsh, *From Calabar to Carter's Grove*, 229.

examines the lives of these enslaved Africans, specifically at Fairfield Plantation, and their role in the creating, maintaining, and redefining the plantation landscape.

The numbers of enslaved Africans brought to Virginia increased significantly at the end of the seventeenth century, eclipsing the indentured servant population by 1703 with over 11,500 in the colony. The most rapid rise during this period occurred in the final decade. Led by the merchant-planter elite, colonists purchased more than 5,000 enslaved Africans. Over that ten year period, enslaved Africans increased from 7% to 15% of the colony's total population. The rapid rise reflects the global nature of the market for enslaved Africans at this time. While elite merchant-planters initially began investing in enslaved Africans during the mid-seventeenth century, the supply grew scarce as the expansion of sugar plantations in the Caribbean created unprecedented demand for laborers. In addition, passage of the navigation acts curtailed open Dutch trade in the Chesapeake, reducing another avenue for acquiring slaves, and leaving colonists to rely on mismanaged and frequently incompetent companies who held monopolistic control over the slave trade in the colonies.¹²⁸

The widespread and rapidly increasing involvement of enslaved Africans in agriculture and other profit-focused efforts, growing Oronoco and sweet-scented tobaccos, occasionally corn and other grains, and perhaps assisting in production of provisions and naval stores for foreign markets, eventually replaced white indentured servants' involvement in these tasks by the early eighteenth century. As investments in agriculture expanded across the colony, demand for enslaved African labor grew exponentially. Slave owners assigned them to non-agricultural activities, including as

¹²⁸ Gary B. Nash, Gary B. Nash and Carter Smith, *Atlas of American History* (New York, 2007):58; James Walvin, *Questioning Slavery* (New York, 1996): 22; Coombs, *Building "The Machine,"* 53-54, 84.

domestic servants, craftsmen, or in other vocations, but these tasks remained a relatively rare part of their everyday life. Nonetheless, the increased presence and greater involvement of enslaved Africans in the plantation's design and function challenged the slave owner to reconcile how they classified human beings who they purchased and legally owned. At the same time, the diverse and increasing population of enslaved Africans working on plantations redefined their identity within a society that kidnapped them, took away their freedoms, and considered them property.

Enslaved Africans maintained an identity of their own creation, derived from their experiences before enslavement, during the Middle Passage, and after their purchase and inclusion within the plantation's labor force.¹²⁹ Their individuality is visible in the archaeological evidence of their actions, in the materials and the landscape they created and left behind. Evidence of their lives during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries at Fairfield plantation is particularly useful as there is a dearth of historic records describing their everyday tasks and actions on this or most any other plantation in the Chesapeake region. If Fairfield plantation was similar to contemporary elite merchant-planter home properties on the York River, then it is important to note that enslaved persons working there did not represent an undifferentiated mass of nameless and faceless laborers. Rather, it included many individuals with unique histories, but also with lines of intersecting experiences. The result: a diverse population of laborers from different tribes and possibly different regions of Africa that occasionally shared similar languages and cultural traditions.

¹²⁹ Stephanie E. Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora* (Cambridge, 2007): 120-121; Emma Christopher, Cassandra Jane Pybus, and Marcus Buford Rediker, *Many Middle Passages: Forced Migration and the Making of the Modern World* (Berkeley, 2007).

Archaeologists and historians struggle to reconstitute the biographies of individuals missing from the historic record, but whose presence in the archaeological evidence is irrefutable. Lorena Walsh, in particular, has accepted this challenge and compiled perhaps the most complete community biography of enslaved Africans in Virginia's history. Her work, coincidentally, focuses on the human property of the Burwell and Bacon families of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This research greatly informs this dissertation, specifically her understanding of the origins of enslaved Africans associated with the Burwell family during the late seventeenth century.

Walsh's research into the broader context of the York River's elite merchant-planters purchases from slave traders was discussed in Chapter 2. Briefly, the greatest number of Africans imported into the York River drainage came from the Bight of Biafra (slightly more than 50%), West Central Africa (about 25%), the Windward Coast/Gold Coast/Bight of Benin (about 12.5%), Senegambia/Sierra Leone (about 8%) and East Africa (4.5%).¹³⁰ While the specific place of origin for many of Fairfield plantation's enslaved workforce will never be known, Walsh believes that due Burwell's (and earlier, Nathaniel Bacon, the Elder's) established trade with the Royal African Company, the preference of that company to focus on the northernmost region of West Africa, and the linguistic connection of some slave names with a specific region, that the majority of enslaved Africans acquired by Lewis Burwell II after Bacon's death in 1692 came from the area of Senegambia. Specifically, she refers to "Colly, Gaby, Sambo, and Yambo among the men and Sama for a woman" as having Senegambian origins while another of Bacon's enslaved Africans, Cuffey, was known

¹³⁰ Walsh, "Migration, Society, Economy, & Settlement," 54.

by an Akan day-name, suggesting his importation from the Gold Coast.¹³¹ She carefully points out that, while those in this group included diverse backgrounds, "the region's various peoples shared a relatively homogenous culture and history, reflecting centuries of living together as neighbors and a continual intermixing between members of the various groups."¹³²

Walsh concludes that they also retained skills useful in tobacco agriculture as well as other support roles ranging from domestic servants and cooks to blacksmiths, carpenters, and weavers.¹³³ Building on intensive research into the material culture and landscape of this region of Africa, Walsh concludes that enslaved Africans possessed the experience and skills to operate and potentially improve the agricultural potential and overall efficiency of the late seventeenth-century plantation. The fact that others kidnapped and sold them to still others who forced them to work against their will, under threat of violence and death, should not be forgotten, though. And the brief references to these people in the occasionally surviving document should not define their existence or their influence on the landscape. This chapter includes a discussion of how the extensive archaeological evidence, contextualized within our understanding of slavery during the late seventeenth century, can help us better understand their labors, their living and working spaces, and their material culture through the landscapes they created and inhabited.

¹³¹ Walsh, *From Calabar to Carter's Grove*, quote 54; see also Lorenzo D. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect* (New York: 1969); Newbell Niles Puckett, *Black Names in America: Origins and Usage* (Boston, 1975); Ihechukwu Madubuike, *A Handbook of African Names* (Washington, D.C., 1976).

¹³² Walsh, *From Calabar to Carter's Grove*, quote 56; Elizabeth Donnan, *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America, Volume 4, The Border Colonies and the Southern Colonies* (New York, 1965): 54-55; Charles L. Killinger, "The Royal African Company Slave Trade to Virginia, 1659-1713" (M.A. thesis, The College of William and Mary, 1969): 144-45.

¹³³ Walsh, *From Calabar to Carter's Grove*, 58, 65.

The landscape under study in this dissertation is as telling about the lives of the many and diverse enslaved laborers who worked at Fairfield plantation as it is about Lewis Burwell II and his family. But it is not the intent of this chapter to establish a strict dichotomy between these two groups, presenting their experiences in direct opposition to each other. To the extent that this would be useful, the contrast would exist between the elite merchant-planter, his family, and his peers and the enslaved population, if one could group them as a single entity. But both were surrounded by the physical conditions they observed, adding a third element to consider. The latter groups - enslaved Africans and the landscape - are not directly comparable, and the intent is not to treat them as two sides of the same coin. This is not a story about an elite merchant-planter attempting to control both his enslaved Africans and his plantation property; scholars must move beyond this discussion. The enslaved Africans also struggled to control the landscape and, to the degree that we can map intention onto the observable natural environment, the plantation would not be controlled. By considering these three forces - the elite merchant-planter, the enslaved African, and the landscape - as active players, it is possible to highlight the struggles of the two human groups, how landscape bound them together, and how, as unequal players, they attempted to manipulate the landscape to their own benefit.

Few surviving documents include reference to enslaved Africans associated with Lewis Burwell II and Fairfield Plantation. This is a frustrating but sadly typical condition for many plantations in Virginia. One of the earliest surviving accounts of Lewis Burwell II purchasing slaves dates to 1693. It was certainly not his first as

these individuals joined no fewer than thirty-nine slaves he inherited from his uncle-in-law the year before. His enslaved labor force grew to its largest known number at eighty-eight in 1710, spread across plantations in seven Virginia counties on more than 26,000 acres. Their names are largely lost to history but it is possible to piece together an initial understanding of their lives from what evidence survives, archaeologically and in the parish church records, receipts, and other documents of this period.¹³⁴

The largest source of evidence documenting the existence of enslaved Africans at Fairfield is the historic landscape, from the fields they plowed and the trails they created between quarters and neighboring plantations, to the manor house Lewis Burwell II forced them to help build. Based on their presence alone, but also on the likelihood that there were many more enslaved Africans than persons of European descent on the property at that time, the plantation must be seen as a symbol of enslaved Africans as much as their white owners. Documents can occasionally help establish the number of slaves, their general age, their family relationships to other slaves, their skills, their name, and occasionally their value. For instance, Lewis Burwell II inherited carpenters Tom, a mulatto (£28), and Will Colly (£40), artisan

¹³⁴ On November 11, 1693, "Major Lewis Burwell of Gloster County" bought "three Negroe slaves...as also 12 good young Cowes with their increase...as also the land, houseing, orchrds, gardings [etc.]" from "William Coman of the County of Yorke" suggesting a connection between enslaved Africans and the lands they worked that only strengthened as the new century began. See YCDOW 1691-1694, IX:291. The estimate for Burwell's largest known labor force comes from Walsh's analysis in Calabar to Carter's Grove (229-230) connecting various purchases, inheritances, and other methods of acquisition. Lewis Burwell II owned 3300 acres in Abingdon Parish (largest estate in the parish), 4,700 acres in King William County, 8,000 acres in Charles City County, 200 acres in New Kent County, 1,350 acres in James City County, 2,100 acres in York County, and 7,000 acres in Isle of Wight County (26,650 total). See Mason, *Records of Colonial Gloucester County*, Volume 1, 87; Des Cognets, Jr., *English Duplicates of Lost Virginia Records*, 123-232. In five of the seven counties he owned land he was one of the top five land owners regarding the number of acres, including the largest landowner in Charles City, the second largest in Gloucester, King William, York, and Isle of Wight. See Blair, *The Rise of the Burwells*, 32.

Natt (£26), and Bungey (£20), presumably a field slave, among thirty-six others from Nathaniel Bacon the Elder through Abigail, Bacon's niece and Burwell's wife. Young Tom, a carpenter, was likely the son of "old Tom" the carpenter, also labeled as mulatto, and "servant" Billy may have worked as a house attendant. These rare surviving references to people document essential elements of the enslaved population's identity but are not the only avenue for learning about their lives. The landscape testifies to their accomplishments, their struggle to survive, and their identity as individuals and as groups.¹³⁵

Lewis Burwell II accumulated larger numbers of enslaved laborers earlier than those on surrounding, smaller plantations. He focused their labor clearing forest and expanding his tobacco crops.¹³⁶ Production and profit expectations changed as the number of enslaved laborers grew and the number of indentured servants decreased. The tasks for enslaved laborers slowly expanded beyond primarily agricultural roles and the potential economic benefits tied to these new labor sources redrew the boundaries of what was possible in the colony. For instance, elite merchant-planters sent enslaved Africans to open new, more productive lands along the frontier of the colony rather than relying solely on recently freed white indentured servants and recent immigrants. Enslaved Africans could operate at less political and social cost. The potential loss of slaves sent to work along a frontier bordered by potentially

¹³⁵ Walsh includes under her Appendix 1 a name-by-name list of known enslaved Africans owned by Lewis Burwell II with notations, including dates for purchase, inheritance, and other forms of acquisition when known. See Walsh, *From Calabar to Carter's Grove*, 229-230; YCDOW, Vol. 9, p. 187.

¹³⁶ Gloria L. Main, *Tobacco Colony: Life in Early Maryland, 1650-1720* (Princeton, 1982): 102-103; Bernard Bailyn, *The Peopling of British North America: An Introduction* (New York, 1985): 102; David W. Galenson, "Economic Aspects of the Growth of Slavery in the Seventeenth-Century Chesapeake," in Barbara L. Solow, ed., *Slavery and the Rise of the Atlantic System* (New York, 1991): 281-86; Coombs, *Building "The Machine."*

violent Virginia Indians was simply easier for elite merchant-planters to accept than the loss of European indentured servants or tenant farmers. Africans did not remind elite merchant-planters of themselves or their family, would never vote, and while they were certainly valuable, it was thought they could be controlled. If not, a revolt along the frontier proved less damaging than one at home. The changing demographics paralleled an accelerated geographic expansion, but it also reframed the role of the plantations, both as homes and investments, in the minds of the merchant-planter elite.

Agriculture, specifically growing the cash crop of tobacco for export, continued as the primary focus of most every planter and land remained the most valuable commodity throughout the late seventeenth century. Alongside newly freed servants and recent immigrants, wealthy merchant-planters acquired land for speculative resale and for productive, virgin soil.¹³⁷ Enslaved laborers would focus more of their time clearing fields and planting crops rather than maintaining the manor house infrastructure and its increasingly complex network of support buildings. Establishing satellite plantations hedged against the unpredictable qualities of tobacco monoculture, including bad weather, insect damage, or labor shortages which might affect one plantation disproportionately when compared to others spread across the colony. Enslaved laborers, managed by an efficient and effective overseer, could be

¹³⁷ It is interesting to note that early in its planting, tobacco's rapid depletion of soil nutrients was seen as positive, allowing for the breakdown of Virginia's rich soil so that other crops, such as wheat, corn, and other cereals, could survive and flourish. But over a short time, perhaps 4-5 growing cycles, the tobacco removed too many nutrients and decreased the fertility of the soil to the point of being nearly unusable. The need for fertile soil for new crops led first to the acquisition and clearing of new lands nearby and later to the expanding frontier where a sufficiently large tract might be purchased all at one time and systematically cleared and prepared for cultivation. Overutilization of tobacco crops would leave planters with virtually useless land good only for grazing, requiring many more years to regain its fertility.

moved to whichever location a master specified. Planters pursued more efficient and productive plantations by replicating the labor system employed on distant quarters of their primary plantation. Employing this approach on properties dedicated to one function (profit) would, again, reduce risk and better insure economic success. This process might begin with the division of the established work force on one plantation, separating and/or forcibly relocating families, and significantly disrupting everyday life. It created a work force increasingly associated with the constituent parts of a larger agricultural machine.

It is easy to hypothesize but difficult to know for certain the effects of relocating enslaved laborers from the home plantation to a satellite plantation. The development of nucleated families of enslaved Africans, associated with specific quarters on a plantation, is more frequently associated with the early eighteenth century, although it is possible that this was already underway at Fairfield plantation as many of the elite merchant-planter estates presaged these and other trends. Much as the colonists settled new lands, the early development of satellite plantations may have begun with primarily male work groups with relatively few families separated, although the nature of the home plantation undoubtedly changed with any population realignment. These concerns may not have mattered to their masters. An infatuation with a new source of relatively controllable and reliable labor, increasing speculation in land by an established and largely secure sociopolitical hierarchy, and a replicable system of agricultural production emboldened the small group of elite merchant-planters to expand investment in all three areas.

New laws, such as the 1669 *act about the casual killing of slaves* and the 1691 *act for suppressing outlying slaves*, further defined the enslaved labor force as property, further limiting their freedoms and stealing their humanity. Historian John Coombs writes, "By the early 1690s, 'Negroes and other slaves' could be beaten with impunity by their masters, killed if they attempted to escape, and placed on trial for their lives without the procedural protections afforded even the lowliest English subject."¹³⁸ He continues, stating:

But whereas until the end of the 1660s the Virginia government's racial policy - at least as it was expressed through statutes - was aimed chiefly at protecting the property rights of masters by preventing slaves from escaping their condition, subsequent acts were altogether different in character. While each addressed a different issue, together they formed a comprehensive program for repressing people of color, marking a pivotal transition from state-sanctioned racial prejudice and discrimination to state-sponsored racism.¹³⁹

These actions further reduced uncertainty in the world of the elite merchant-planter. When combined with the familiarity and relative predictability of the established agricultural system, they essentially allowed competent plantation owners to project potential costs and profits.

Regardless of the Virginia plantation, the tobacco crop began the same way in any location. A short summary of this process provides a glimpse into the relationship between the plantation's two dominant agricultural elements: the fields and the laborers. The process began with workers clearing and/or preparing land for seedbeds in January or February, approximately 40 square yards of seedbed for each acre of

¹³⁸ Coombs, *Building "The Machine,"* 360.

¹³⁹ William Walter Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia, from the First Session of the Legislature in the Year 1619*. Volume 2 (Charlottesville, 1969): 270; William Walter Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia, from the First Session of the Legislature in the Year 1619*. Volume 3 (Charlottesville, 1969): 86-88; Coombs, *Building "The Machine,"* 160-161.

tobacco. Laborers planted the tobacco seeds before the middle of March, raking the beds, covering them with pine needles for protection. By mid-April, workers reorganized seedlings about four inches apart, the weakest removed and others replanted to compensate for damage from poor weather or the tobacco flea beetle. Transplanting the seedlings to prepared fields began in May; with one per knee-high hill, spaced every three or four feet across the field. This was the most arduous task as an experienced adult could form no more than five hundred hills a day, planting the seedling after rain softened the soil.¹⁴⁰

Keeping weeds and worms away from the plant occupied laborers for the first two months after planting. By July, focus spread to encouraging high quality, large leaves, cutting the lowest leaves to control moisture ("priming"), removing the highest leaves to prevent flowers and seeds (topping), and removing suckers to focus the plants energy towards large leaf growth. Selective pruning continued when the plant reached between three and four feet. Changes in weather and the vicious horn worms, which could destroy a crop in less than a week, required daily attention to the fields. By late August/early September the plants were six to nine feet, mature and ready to harvest. Robert Carter, a skilled planter of the highest caliber and contemporary of Lewis Burwell II, wrote of the image, there was an "abundance of plants at every place."¹⁴¹ A skilled planter knew exactly when to harvest the crop, not too early before it was fully mature and not too late when there was the risk of a frost destroying the entire crop. The right color (a yellowish green), texture (thick, rough and downy) and

¹⁴⁰ L.C. Gray, *History of Agriculture in the Southern United States to 1860*, Volume I (Gloucester, MA, 1958): 220-222. See Walsh, *Motives of Honor, Pleasure, & Profit*, 22.

¹⁴¹ Carter L. Hudgins, "The "King's" Realm: An Archaeological and Historical Analysis of Robert Carter's Corotoman" (Ms. on file, Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, 1985): 60-61, n. 26: Robert Carter "Diary, 1722-1728," 30 May 1722.

pliancy (a leaf that broke when it was folded between one's fingers) made all the difference. The season could last for some time with the ideal harvest depending on when each plant was put to ground.

By this time, curing took place in a tobacco barn where bundles hung from poles extending horizontally across the structure on multiple levels. Lasting between four and six weeks, deciding when to stop the curing was as crucial as timing the harvest, needing to prevent mold but wanting to complete the "striking" before too long. After leaving the tobacco on the floor of the barn during a period of damp weather to sweat for one or two weeks, laborers sorted what they considered "in case" or those leaves that had absorbed just the right amount of moisture: too moist and it would rot before sale; too dry and it would crumble into dust. Whether twisted and rolled and spun into rope, or layered and packed tightly into large barrels or hogsheads, laborers would bring them from barn to wharf for pickup by a merchant ship often traveling from dock to dock, plantation to plantation, loading tobacco as it sailed down the river.

The colony's elite merchant-planters confidence increased alongside their profits. More than a half-century of experience solidified the thirteen-month growing season firmly within the colony's economic calendar and largely determined the everyday work schedule on a plantation, particularly for enslaved Africans.¹⁴² But other factors should also be considered as influencing this process, including enslaved Africans' familiarity with growing tobacco in Africa and their greater experience with the style of agriculture necessary to increase tobacco production (namely hoeing and

¹⁴² Anthony S. Parent, *Foul Means: The Formation of a Slave Society in Virginia, 1660-1740* (Chapel Hill, 2003): 61-62. See also G. Melvin Herndon, *Tobacco in Colonial Virginia: The Sovereign Remedy* (Williamsburg, 1957).

planting in mounds) than new European immigrants. Also consider the enslaved African's status as property, meaning Lewis Burwell II could work them longer each day, each week, and each month. By the end of the century the consistently increasing demand, which followed from an increasing familiarity and comfortability with slavery, was met with greater supply from slave traders, reducing purchase prices and allowing for easier acquisitions of replacements.

Savvy merchant-planters understood that economic progress required control over labor and land. Lewis Burwell II focused his efforts on increasing both. As one example of this, in 1679, along with Lewis Griffin, he attempted to expand his landholdings by taking possession of recently deceased and heirless John Burnham's 2,250 acres in Middlesex County, serving as executors of the estate. Challenged by Burnham's neighbor, Ralph Wormeley, who also wanted the land, neither party gained access to the acreage for several years. While this example highlights the competition between elite merchant-planters, it also demonstrates their dedication to the acquisition and control over large tracts of land, even if it took years before it made them any profit.¹⁴³

A second example focuses on Lewis Burwell II's expanded re-patent of his father's estate in 1680, now including 3,400 acres. His description of the property bounds provides insight into the significant changes to the landscape since his father's

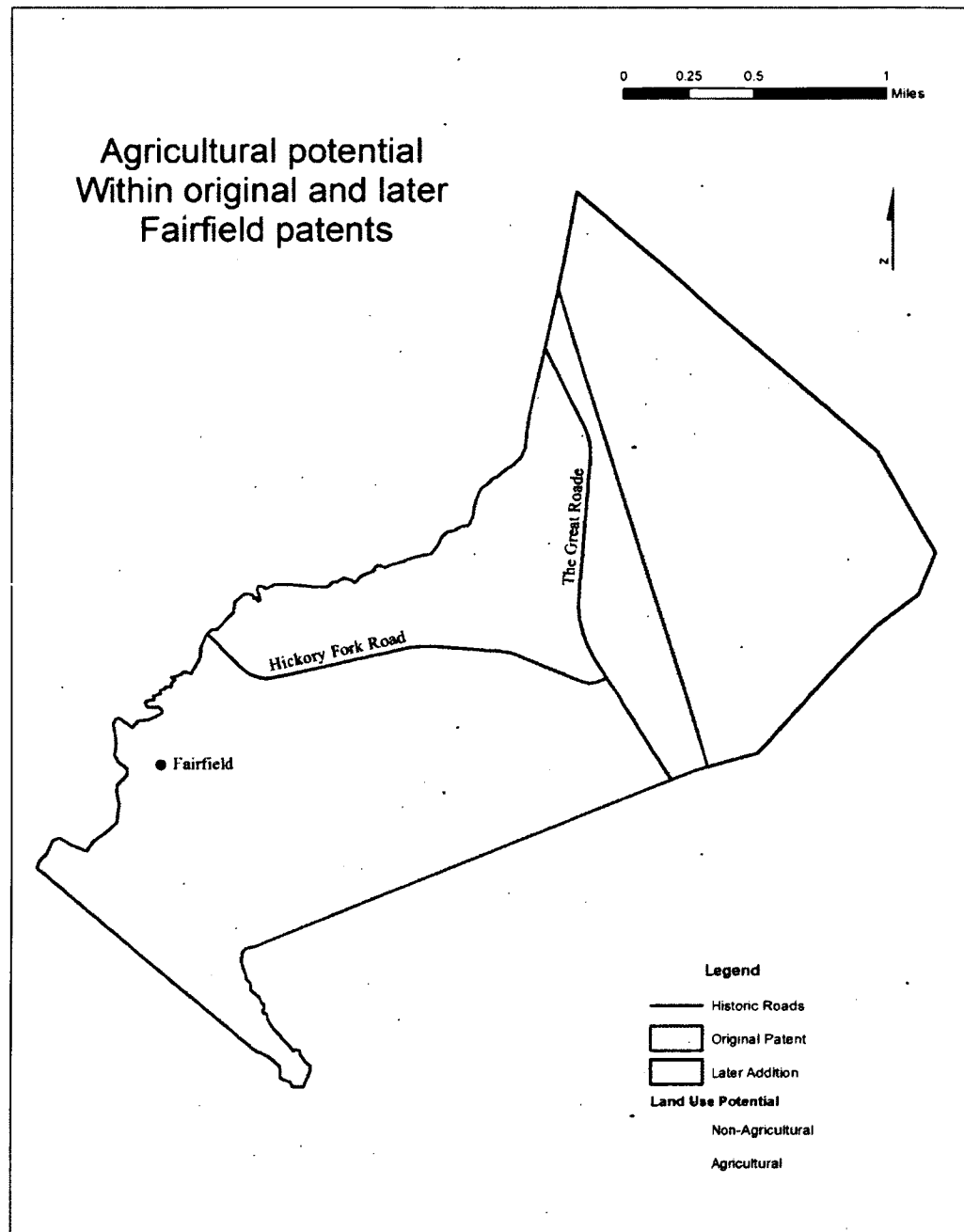
¹⁴³ H.R. McIlwaine, ed., *Executive Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia*, Volume I, (11 June 1680 - 22 June 1699) (Richmond, 1925): 479-85; Blair, *The Rise of the Burwells*, 15, n. 4, 5; no author, "Letters of William Fitzhugh," in *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 2 (1894), 1: 254-258; no author, "The Wormeley Family," in *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 36 (1928), 1: 98-101, no author, "The Wormeley Family," in *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 36 (1928), 3:283-293, no author, "The Wormeley Family," in *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 36 (1928), 4:385-388; Burwell and Griffin challenged this in Middlesex County court; See also no author, "The Randolph Manuscript: Griffin and Burwell vs. Wormeley in the General Court of Virginia, 1681 (Part 1)," in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 18 (1910), 2: 129-139.

patent in 1648. Mentioned in the description are noteworthy and new species of trees, including "Mirtle Point," established and diverse agricultural enterprises, including "John Creeds old field & Orchard... adjoining Peter Garlands plantation...& Dr. Clarkes cleered ground," and references to internal divisions within either his or his neighbors' plantations, notably the "old quarter field." The significant size of Fairfield plantation and the family's steady rise among the wealthiest members of colonial society suggests that, even after twenty-five years of growing tobacco, the fields were sufficiently productive to counter a generally declining market, or included sufficient underutilized land within its bounds to compensate for exhausted or unproductive soils.¹⁴⁴

Essential to any reading of this patent are the key words which connect directly with introducing new species to the plantation, implementing a new design strategy, and the presence of the enslaved men and women required to accomplish these and other landscape changes. It is possible that indentured servants, day laborers, or tenant farmers enacted some of these modifications. But the "old quarter field" is the most overt reference connected with enslaved laborers. The "quarter" in seventeenth-century Virginia could describe a subdivision of the plantation (acreage), a group of worker residences for that acreage, or a building within that group.¹⁴⁵ The "old" descriptor undoubtedly links these fields to the period before Lewis Burwell II inherited the property only four years before.

¹⁴⁴ Mason, *Records of Colonial Gloucester County*, Volume 1, 15.

¹⁴⁵ The most common term associated with a Chesapeake slave's home was "quarter" and Lounsbury lists three meanings for the term: "a domestic structure devoted to the accommodation of slaves"; "a group or cluster of houses occupied by slaves"; or "part of a larger holding of land devoted to agricultural production." Lounsbury's attribution of the first definition as the most common is based on a review of contemporary primary sources, including colonial parish vestry books, county records, and family papers. See Carl R. Lounsbury, ed., *An Illustrated Glossary of Early Southern Architecture and Landscape* (New York, 1994): 300-301.



Agricultural potential within original and later Fairfield patents.
The Fairfield Foundation, White Marsh, Virginia.

This detailed reading of Lewis Burwell II's repatent of Fairfield Plantation serves as one method for recapturing the lost evidence for his investment in agriculture

and enslaved laborers. It also provides an opportunity to understand how he put the acreage into productive use, likely cultivating sweet-scented tobacco, possibly adding corn, wheat and other food crops for the plantation's residents and livestock.

Displayed over a map of soil types corresponding to degrees of agricultural productivity, it is possible to project a potential area of approximately 1,794 acres (52.76% of the 3400 acre patent in 1680) either highly or moderately suitable for tobacco production. This image might be interpreted to show a nearly inexhaustible supply of land for tobacco cultivation. One or two laborers could adequately cultivate an acre of productive tobacco farmland throughout the year, requiring a workforce of over 1000 laborers to put every suitable acre into production. But to focus only on the act of growing tobacco, while the most significant element of this agricultural process, is to ignore the work of laborers preparing and maintaining the fields, fences, roads, barns, and wharves that helped make tobacco monoculture possible and profitable. The forests had to be timbered, the stumps gradually removed as they rotted away, and the ground properly prepared, delaying productive use of the field for at least a year when seasonal labor surpluses allowed for gangs of laborers to descend on the selected acreage, assuming optimum weather conditions and laborer cooperation. The elements of time, including the need to let fields fallow, and space, including the distance between quarters and the manor house, resulted in a landscape of great potential for enslaved Africans and elite merchant planters.

The colony's wealthiest planters, including Lewis Burwell II, made a concerted attempt to squeeze as much productivity out of the land and their enslaved laborers as possible. By the fourth quarter of the seventeenth century the elite understood that

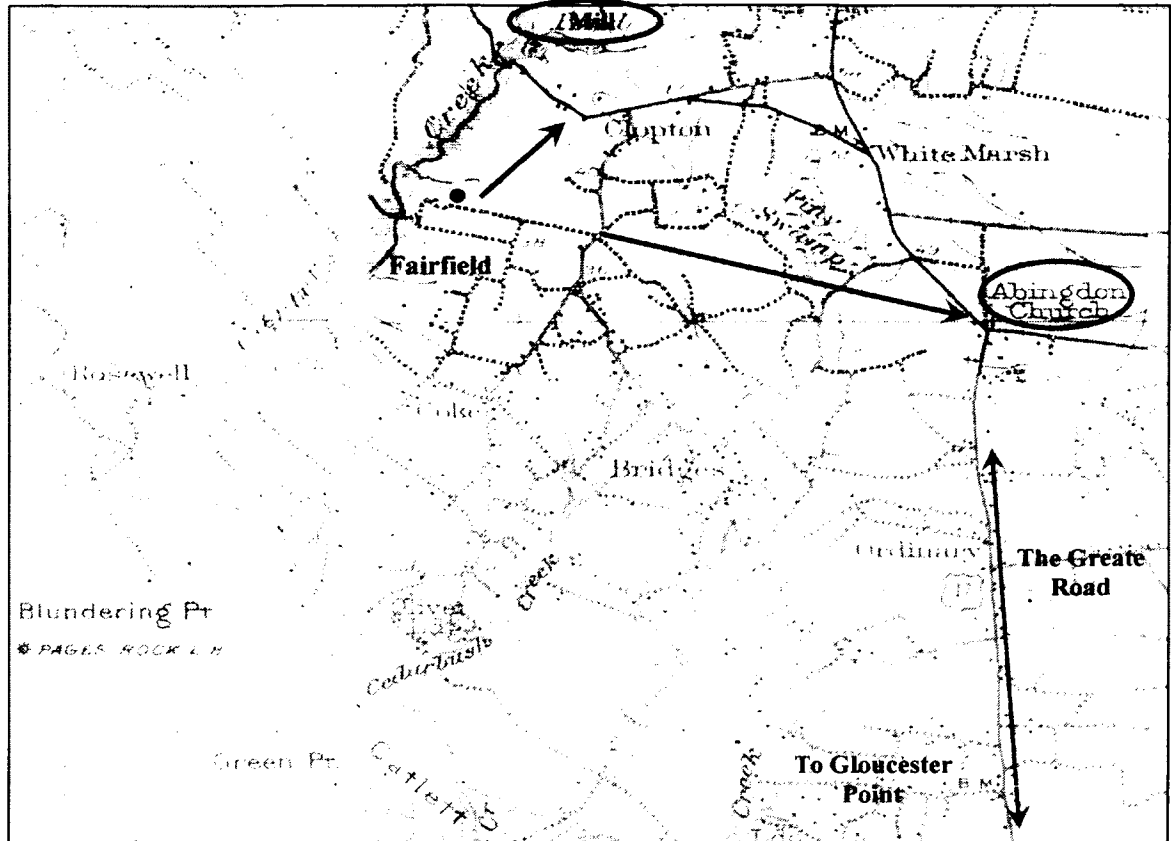
experimentation in other cash crops, particularly along the York River drainage, would not yield comparable profits to tobacco, even in the least productive years.

Provisioning plantations along the southern Eastern Shore and the Southside along the lower James River produced greater percentages of crops such as Indian corn and English wheat during this period, absorbing whatever market existed for foreign and domestic production of these staples. While it is likely that elite planters increased their own production of these crops, they did so to accommodate an expanding labor force, increasing numbers of livestock, and perhaps surplus to cover seasonal shortages or to sell to neighbors.

Rather than investing in secondary cash crops to compensate for poor profits during off years of the erratic tobacco market, the elite merchant planters focused on greater efficiencies, pushing their enslaved African labor force harder, and building infrastructure to reduce long-term risk. Building a mill, hiring skilled craftsmen, maintaining roads, improving fields and pasture with fences, while clearing more land for tobacco not only improved the productivity of the plantation operations, but it demonstrated a commitment by the owner to assert control over the landscape.

The shift towards improving the plantation's infrastructure came with a greater reliance on enslaved laborers and an expansion in the number and types of tasks required of them. The development of a more complex infrastructure also required more time from workers than the occasional breaks in tobacco cultivation. New roles came with greater expectations and a push to quickly implement new improvements.¹⁴⁶ As long as the availability of new enslaved Africans matched the

¹⁴⁶ Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, 295-315.



Fairfield plantation and related landmarks mentioned in the text.
United States Geological Survey, Clay Bank, 7.5-minute Quadrangle, 1915.

demand for greater productivity in the fields and in new tasks, the elite merchant-planters could increase tobacco cultivation at the same time they improved their plantation. The elite merchant-planter's acceptance of the value of enslaved African workers, rather than translating into improvements in living conditions or greater freedoms to ensure productivity, led to further laws and restrictions that insured a steady supply, creating the sustainable and "controllable" local workforce and more stable, reliable, and increasingly predictable profits in the early eighteenth century.¹⁴⁷

Direct written evidence of Lewis Burwell II's investments in corn, wheat, and other non-tobacco crops does not survive, but it is likely that he participated and,

¹⁴⁷ Coombs, *Building "The Machine,"* 160, 176.

perhaps, succeeded to an extent similar to his peers. What is certain, though, is Lewis Burwell II's investment in the infrastructure necessary to process corn and wheat, specifically his ownership of a grist mill by 1680.¹⁴⁸ His milling operations served to develop a secondary market in processing the corn and wheat produced by neighbors and other nearby farmers, processing of his own excess corn and wheat for sale to the local population, and possibly its processing for export or provisioning of his other plantations. The significant costs necessary to develop such an operation limited mills to the properties of the elite or to areas of sufficient population that they would attract a substantial clientele. In the case of the former, the mill served as a community investment as much as a personal one, providing nearby farmers and tenants with a resource vital to sustaining the local population.

Sometime before 1680, Lewis Burwell II or one of his step-fathers hired skilled craftsmen who, alongside manual laborers, constructed the mill complex, including the excavation of the mill race, building the mill damn, and maintaining this heavily industrial area throughout the year. The process involved moving the mill stones from ships docked further down Carter Creek, creating the intricate superstructure necessary for efficiently grinding the grains, and the later sharpening and re-sharpening of the stones. Enslaved field laborers transported unprocessed grains to the mill, and subsequently packed and transported the flour and meal to the

¹⁴⁸ The grist mill may have been in existence by mid-century and may have been constructed by his father. In a deed dated January 18, 1651, Thomas Sampson and Thomas Holyday sold 200 acres to John Richards "upon the North west syde of Rosewell Creek opposite to the land of Mr. Lewis Burwell" in which is referenced "the westward side of a path" which aligns with modern day Rt. 614 (Hickory Fork Road) (YCDOW, Vol. 1, p. 135). At the very least this documents an inland travel route but, potentially, infers the presence of a mill dam that would allow passage across Carter Creek; YCDOW, 1633-1657, I:174, referenced in Mason, *Records of Colonial Gloucester County*, Volume 1, 52. The post-Civil War mill was rebuilt presumably overtop of an earlier mill and perhaps in the same location as Burwell's first mill. Some remnants are visible adjacent the mill pond and roadway, although no archaeological testing has been undertaken at the site.

manor house stores, ships offshore, and to markets at the courthouse and Gloucester Town.¹⁴⁹

The mill was an import place of interaction between Burwell, his laborers, and neighbors and customers across the county, connecting groups who would seldom have reason to interact. Its greatest value was milling Burwell's subsistence crops, meeting the increasing demand of an expanding plantation population, although it likely produced some profits from milling other peoples' corn and wheat. An intangible benefit included the benefit to Burwell's image and his influence in the community.¹⁵⁰

Accompanying the milled products to the courthouse or to Gloucester Town further exposed these laborers, including enslaved Africans, to the wider world, to goods not readily accessible at the plantation, and to markets where products could be sold and cash obtained. This travel occurred most often along paths and informal roads connecting plantations, farmsteads, and mills as well as creeks or rivers. The landscape described by most travelers of the period compared more to a trail in the forest, perhaps even an "Indian Path" as many patents of this period reference. Worn down by decades or centuries of travelers who found the most efficient or convenient routes across landforms and between settlements, the purposes of moving goods and

¹⁴⁹ The identity of the miller remains unknown. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries African Americans operated the mill and built boats on the third floor, rowing down Carter Creek to find fish and oysters, but the mill was always owned by whites. Charlie Carter, personal communication (2003).

¹⁵⁰ One approach to interpreting the intangible benefits of the mill is through Genovese's use of paternalism in a transitioning pre-capitalist-to-capitalist environment where the elite considered the control of enslaved Africans, and to a different extent lower class whites, as their responsibility and these parties looking to the elite merchant-planter to provide economic and social opportunities. An approach I prefer, alternatively, is promoted by historian Rhys Isaac, who might see the mill as operating within the larger system of deference between the elite and the middling planters and lower classes nearby. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*; Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia*.

people changed with the arrival of an already road-focused population of European immigrants that found this form of travel more agreeable than the often cited statement that "the creeks and riverbeds were the highways of the colonial period" would lead one to believe.¹⁵¹ Property divisions, the transportation of goods, and the urge to create more familiar surroundings, at least for recent emigrants, resulted in laws and official positions in county governments responsible for maintaining and, occasionally, building roads and bridges. Roads near Fairfield Plantation that date to the land's first patent continue in service through today, including Rt. 615, Hickory Fork Road, adjacent to Haynes (Burwell's) Mill Pond. In this instance, the road represented a property boundary, leading to a beaver dam or convenient creek crossing. Before the end of the seventeenth century, and perhaps earlier, it led to Lewis Burwell II's mill, connecting eastwardly with the main road bisecting the county and to the parish church.

The roads mentioned by travelers and noted on maps did not include the rough paths between quarters, small farmsteads, and tenant houses. Those are the spaces left unnoted, absent from the historical record but essential to the everyday lives of the middling planters, tenants, and especially the enslaved Africans traveling across the plantation and throughout the county. Existing outside of the elite merchant-planter's world, these landscape elements represented a refuge from the increasingly restricted life of an enslaved laborer. They represented the potential for escape, not from the perpetual condition of bondsperson or from the wrath of the owner's whip or lash, but

¹⁵¹ Brown, ""...to the place where it began."

rather a refuge with the reassurance that a part of their life was not subject to their master's control.¹⁵²

These trails represent one way that enslaved Africans created their own landscape. Alongside the plantation owner's landscape, this "black landscape" originated from what enslaved Africans viewed through their own cultural understandings of what they needed, what they could control, and what they considered unimportant. It differed significantly from the plantation owner's landscape, from their cognitive understanding of the world around them. Architectural historian Rebecca Ginsburg notes, "enslaved people's views of their surroundings assumed less of a 'godhead' perspective than did male planters' views." She adds, "enslaved workers' territorial systems were typically more fluid and incorporated more fine-scaled details than did those of elite whites." Despite sharing much of the same geographic space, black landscapes remained largely unnoticed by elite merchant-planters who failed to recognize them for what they represented, and unintentionally allowed the enslaved workers "a useful place for acts they wished to hide from whites, such as eating stolen goods, enacting rituals, [or] taking a break from work."¹⁵³

Black landscapes did not originate out of the plantation owner's ignorance or laziness. Frank and her husband Jacob, along with their children Sam, Lewis, Molly,

¹⁵² Rebecca Ginsburg, "Escaping through a Black Landscape," in Ellis and Ginsburg, *Cabin, Quarter, Plantation*, 63.

¹⁵³ Ginsburg's discussion derives from a review of scholars' understanding of "the sphere occupied by enslaved people" known variously as the "black landscape," "black cognitive environment," "alternative territorial system," "alternative geography," and the "behavioral environment" of enslaved workers. See Vlach, *Back of the Big House*; Upton, "White and Black Landscapes," 357-369; Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia*; Stephanie M.H. Camp, *Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South* (Chapel Hill, 2004), Ginsburg, "Escaping through a Black Landscape," 52.

Martha, and Frank (daughter), as a family of enslaved Africans, are among the many who created their own landscapes through their actions, the development of their own personal connections, hierarchy, and plantation-specific culture, infusing the environment with their own meanings.¹⁵⁴ It is important to note that there were many black landscapes as well, differing between tribal groups, between social classes that developed within the enslaved population, and those unique to individuals. Ginsburg writes that the idea of the black landscape refers "to the ways of looking at one's surroundings that made slaves' exploitation of such sites possible at all." She continues, "participation in the black landscape contributed to the production of a distinctive black geography...an expression of geographical intelligence...[that] refers to ways that enslaved people knew the land."

The landscape of enslaved Africans did not include the elite merchant-planter's intention of display and performance; it did not attempt to influence and impress the same people. Through a combination of markers, sometimes barely modified, other times left unaltered, enslaved Africans established their ownership and control over the landscape they created, subverting the power of their owners by daring to create a world all their own, within a world largely foreign to them.¹⁵⁵

The idea of overlapping and subversive landscapes is not new and their existence unsurprising. Building on the studies of oppressed peoples throughout

¹⁵⁴ Ginsburg writes "the 'landscape eye' did not emerge until the Renaissance as a response to new understandings of and attitudes to property, technology, and religious belief. The particulars of sixteenth-century modes of seeing, of course, are not as useful to us here as the powerful idea that distinct landscapes – understood as ways of perceiving – exist and that each, in the words of geographer Denis Cosgrove, "is a restrictive way of seeing that diminishes alternative modes of experiencing our relationship with nature." See Cosgrove, *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape*, 1. The black landscape was the particular cognitive order that enslaved workers generally imposed on the settings that surrounded them and through which they connected those settings to other places. Ginsburg, "Escaping through a Black Landscape," 55-56. Walsh, *From Calabar to Carter's Grove*, 229-230.

¹⁵⁵ Ginsburg, "Escaping through a Black Landscape," 54-56.

history, it is difficult but not impossible to understand how these landscapes coexisted and how to read them in the archaeological and environmental evidence that survives, without the advantage of knowing the people under consideration. These landscapes have the markers of resistance, intelligence, community, and most important, identity. By acknowledging the existence of multiple landscapes, the enslaved African could use their actions to counteract the efforts of the plantation owner to harm them and to take away their freedoms. Through these actions they developed an understanding of the owner's landscape, their perspective, and their motivations as demonstrated across the plantation and on the bodies of the enslaved and the fabric of their surroundings.¹⁵⁶

The knowledge that came from this understanding of the planter's world translated into cultural power, confidence, and community. Despite the diverse origins and identities of the Africans sold into slavery, forced to work and live within the plantation environs, there developed a "shared, hidden landscape" where, through their experiences they "formed bonds of support, trust, and resistance to white control" and, in the process, enslaved Africans such as Mulatto Nan and her son, Sam, purchased by Lewis Burwell II's son, Nathaniel, in 1706, "became aware of what many white people never did – namely, the extent of the sphere of black activity that coexisted with but was out of the control of planter-enslavers and their allies."¹⁵⁷

Proximity often correlated to power. Whether being within sight, within shouting distance, or within reach, different contexts corresponded to different degrees of control between the enslaved African and the white property owner. As people moved across the landscape, these conditions changed. The distant quarter, beyond

¹⁵⁶ *ibid.*, 54, 63. See also Patricia Hill Collins, *Fighting Words: Black Women and the Search for Justice* (Minneapolis, 1998): 7.

¹⁵⁷ Ginsburg, "Escaping through a Black Landscape," 63; Walsh, *From Calabar to Carter's Grove*, 230.

the sight of the owner, but perhaps in sight of the overseer, existed at the edge of the plantation and, at times, the edge of the owner's influence. Situations like this demonstrate the complex role of landscape. It included barriers, both man-made and natural, that changed how people interacted and perceived their social conditions.

These barriers could be manipulated and redefined over time. One example includes a fence or tree line that might divide two spaces, visually and/or physically, from one another regardless of their proximity. Another example is the home quarter, associated with the manor house and often within sight of it. Already functioning as a residential area for possibly the largest concentration of enslaved Africans on the plantation, slave housing and related support buildings at the plantation's administrative and formal center were the most frequently visible expression of the owner's landscape design beyond the manor house. These buildings and the areas between them represented contested spaces of great tension, great power, and great change as the definition of slavery and the identity of enslaved Africans developed during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

Different people experienced the quarter in different ways. The written descriptions of European travelers and slave owners reflect a world of enslaved Africans lacking in intelligence, character, and basic human qualities. They classified the slave residence as a "Negro House," "Negro hut," and "quarter house," among other terms. These accounts do not address the plantation owner's restrictions on what slaves could use and do to their homes and show no understanding that enslaved Africans saw the world through different eyes, not as a singular group, but one that represented many tribes and regions of Africa. European observers occasionally

reference, but fail to understand, the significance of these buildings as the setting for singing and dancing, friendships, and personal relationships. But the quarter and its surroundings were significantly more meaningful. Together they helped define the lives of the enslaved. New residents moved in, the old died, the young multiplied; others were sold, ran away, or moved to another quarter. The safety and security of the quarter, challenged by impermanence and constant change, operated as one of the few physical havens where slaves could retreat.¹⁵⁸

Archaeological excavations at other Virginia slave quarter sites inform and help contextualize the importance of enslaved African housing and workspace. One of the most frequently studied and cited examples from a field quarter is the Utopia quarter in James City County. A series of occupations that covered four periods, including an early occupation (Utopia II) roughly contemporary with the Fairfield quarter, research revealed evidence of greater autonomy among the quarter's residents who lived at a considerable distance from their owner, likely development of enslaved families and initial reorganization from barrack-style, gender segregated housing to quarters consisting of nucleated family units, and the possibility of purposely arranged quarter buildings that reflecting the Igbo ancestry of the enslaved occupants.¹⁵⁹

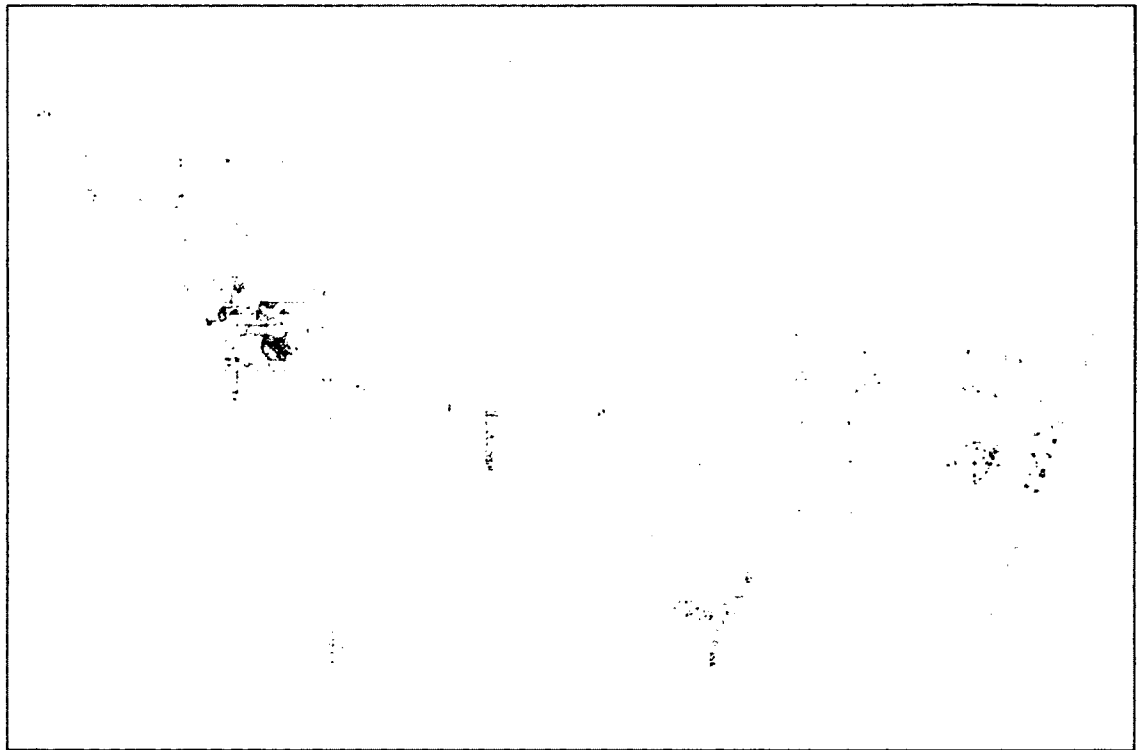
Examples of slave quarter excavations closer to the manor house include those at Mount Vernon (mid-to-late eighteenth century), and Poplar Forest (late eighteenth-to-early nineteenth century), and the Hermitage (late eighteenth-to-mid-nineteenth

¹⁵⁸ The definitions of these terms depended greatly on the region, South Carolinians preferring Negro House to quarter house. More often the choice of term was based on the quality of the structure (i.e. hut) or its location on the plantation. See Lounsbury, *An Illustrated Glossary*, 187, 241; David Brion Davis, *Slavery in the Colonial Chesapeake* (Williamsburg, 1986): 24; Kenneth Morgan, *Slavery and Servitude in Colonial North America: A Short History* (Washington Square, N.Y., 2001): 81.

¹⁵⁹ Fesler, "Excavating the Spaces and Interpreting the Places," 27-50.

century).¹⁶⁰ These excavations include some of the most up-to-date analyses and interpretations, highlighting differences between field and domestic quarters and the latter's access to a more diverse world of dietary options and material culture, the development of consumerism among the enslaved, changes in the use of space within quarters, and the exploitation of plantation resources by enslaved Africans. The research program at Thomas Jefferson's Monticello balances the excavation of field and home quarter, including the renowned late eighteenth-/early nineteenth-century craft buildings and quarters of Mulberry Row. Among the most significant findings of their excavations was identifying the transition in slave quarter location alongside the shift from tobacco monoculture to a focus on growing corn and wheat. Jefferson moved his field quarters away from flat, arable land to the edges of fields and slopes poorly suited to growing mixed grains. While the research at most of these sites contributes more to developing innovative and productive methodological approaches to studying landscape and enslaved African life than it does to the specific period and historic context of late seventeenth-century Fairfield plantation, the authors broaden the field of inquiry and interpretive potential by the variety of perspectives they bring to bare on the multiple lines of evidence and the complex cultural landscape of each plantation.

¹⁶⁰ For Mount Vernon see Dennis J. Pogue, "Slave Lifeways at Mount Vernon: An Archaeological Perspective" in *Slavery at the Home of George Washington*, edited by Philip J. Schwarz (Mount Vernon, 2001): 111-135, for Monticello see Fraser D. Neiman, "The Lost World of Monticello: An Evolutionary Perspective," in *Journal of Anthropological Research* 64 (2008): 161-193 for the Hermitage see Whitney Battle-Baptiste, "'In this here place': Interpreting Enslaved Homeplaces" in *Archaeology of Atlantic Africa and the African Diaspora*, edited by Akinwumi Ogundiran and Toyin Falola (Bloomington, 2007): 233-248; and for Poplar Forest see Barbara Heath and Jack Gary, eds., *Jefferson's Poplar Forest: Unearthing a Virginia Plantation* (Gainesville, 2012); also, for other slave quarter excavations see Thomas Jefferson Foundation, *Digital Archaeological Archive of Comparative Slavery*. Charlottesville, [<http://www.daacs.org/>].



Excavation areas surrounding the manor house ruin (center) including the home quarter (left), formal garden (below), and clay borrow pit and seventeenth-century tree hole (right).
The Fairfield Foundation, White Marsh, Virginia.

The slave quarter at the heart of Fairfield plantation represented this complex cultural landscape and much more to the people who built it, lived within it, and worked around it. About seventy-five feet west of the manor house, the building's wood frame rested on ground-laid sills and the daylight penetrated the clapboard walls at select points where windows opened through the north and south elevations. A daub chimney flanked a gable end, constructed from mud and sticks, while the heat of the fire within hardened the inside and the sun performed similarly outside. The dark interior, warmed at each end with the crackling fire, measured barely more than twelve feet wide, the two small rooms likely served as home to a handful of enslaved African men and women who worked in and around the manor house.

Accounts of slave life on other plantations, and archaeological excavations on the sites discussed earlier, help develop an image of the daily routine which may have taken place at Fairfield plantation. Awake before dawn, the day began as early for those in the "home quarter" as for those working in the fields further from the manor house. Rising from the straw mats and blankets stretched out across the floor, dirt served as the mattress for those on the first story while the floorboards served the same purpose for still others living in the small, unlit, and unheated garret above. As one of the enslaved African occupants stoked the fire, the room filled with activity as others prepared the morning meal, cleared the room for the day's tasks, and slowly moved outside into the early morning light to gather firewood and water and feed the animals. Windows were opened, the breeze whisked through the building, and the sunlight poked through the tops of the trees.¹⁶¹

This short vignette more fully describes the likely layout and use of this building, its atmosphere and its environs, than a more piecemeal description based solely on the archaeological evidence recovered from Fairfield plantation. It highlights the humanity associated with this space and this place. First and foremost a house, it also served as a home, a workplace, and a significant element of a much larger black landscape. The quarter, regardless of the number of occupants or their familial connections, was "the institutional embodiment of the slave community in the Chesapeake."¹⁶² The physical manifestation of the master's control over productivity,

¹⁶¹ This description, much like the ones included in the introduction, is based on a combination of historical and archaeological evidence and personal experience of the author, the latter informing specifically the physical conditions of the quarter location, rather than the perspective of the enslaved. The goal of the vignette is to re-introduce a degree of human activity and emotion to the often emotionless archaeological data and the analogous evidence derived from contemporary accounts of other plantations.

¹⁶² Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 132.

it served many capacities. As a box, it held as many of a plantation owner's slaves as possible, outfitted with only the barest necessities unless justified as part of the owner's landscape of presentation. The plantation owner might exact changes to sustain and improve its efficiency, including creating (or allowing) small gardens to help feed the occupants, its construction near fresh water or new fields, or modifications to accommodate barrack-style living or possibly families and children. But it was just one of so many interchangeable parts of this landscape from his perspective, at the same time indispensable and yet replaceable, much like its enslaved African occupants.¹⁶³

Fairfield plantation, if it followed suit with many of the estates owned by the merchant-planter elite, commonly incorporated racially integrated workforces during the second half of the seventeenth century. Visitors to the region commented as such in the 1670s, stating that servants and slaves were "one with another" routinely "employed in the culture of tobacco." As the century drew to a close, though, the numbers of European indentured servants dwindled as fewer were available, they became prohibitively expensive (compared to increasingly less costly enslaved Africans), and "were less costly to maintain than servants and decidedly easier to exploit."¹⁶⁴

¹⁶³ Historians have treated slave quarters and slavery within the context of the slave system more often than in the context of life experience. Examples include Breen, *Tobacco Culture*; Wesley Frank Craven, *White, Red, and Black: The Seventeenth-Century Virginian* (Charlottesville, 1971); James A. Rawley, *The Transatlantic Slave Trade: A History* (New York, 1981); Robert S. Cope, *Carry Me Back: Slavery and Servitude in Seventeenth-Century Virginia* (Pikeville, 1973); Genovese, *The Political Economy of Slavery*.

¹⁶⁴ Jasper Danckaerts, Peter Sluyter, and Henry Cruse Murphy, *Journal of a Voyage to New York* (Ann Arbor, 1966): 216; Edmund S. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (New York, 1975): 295-315, quotation 309-10; Coombs, *Building "The Machine,"* 71, 73-76.

A 1662 Virginia law mandated slave owners supply their "human chattel" with food, clothing, housing and medical attention. A lack of recorded enforcement, though, suggests that this was done more often out of custom than fear of enforcement by the colonial government. Historian James Ballagh wrote "the maintenance of the slave in contrast with that of the servant was an obligation left almost wholly to the regulation of custom." He continues, "motives of humanity and interest were considered sufficient impulses to control the master's action here without the intervention of legislation," assuming that, "the scarcity of complaints as compared with those of servants shows that the assumption was fully justified." But Ballagh failed to take into consideration the slaveholder's resources, both economic and humane, and the degree to which the slaveholder chose to expend them. These factors, in addition to custom, ultimately dictated the level of influence slave owners had on the form and quality of quarter structures.¹⁶⁵

The rate of construction for quarters specifically intended to house enslaved African laborers increased during the fourth quarter of the seventeenth century. This trend marked a transition in plantation housing, from owners and workers (both European and African) living in close proximity and occasionally under the same roof to the separation of non-family members in separate rooms or structures. This represented an initial "divergence of American society from that of the England from which it came," in what some scholars see as the transformation from an Atlantic to Virginian society.¹⁶⁶ It also reflected the increasing codification and acceptance of

¹⁶⁵ James Curtis Ballagh, *A History of Slavery in Virginia* (Baltimore, 1902): 102; Lounsbury, *An Illustrated Glossary*, 300.

¹⁶⁶ Deetz, *Flowerdew Hundred*, 77.

slavery as slave quarters became increasingly separate buildings from those of white servants, at least on larger plantations in the Chesapeake.¹⁶⁷

A typical turn-of-the-century quarter measured about twenty by sixteen feet. Historians described them as "built of logs standing or lying directly on the ground or erected in postholes, with wooden, clay-daubed chimneys that could be knocked down quickly if they caught on fire." Historian Philip Morgan further described this type of building as "drafty, dark, dilapidated dwellings...the floors of their houses...mere hardened dirt, as were their yards." Archaeological evidence lends further detail to these descriptions, suggesting greater variability in the size, quality, and materials used in their construction on the plantations of the elite, largely due to the building's proximity to the manor house or position within the larger landscape arrangement. Some had glazed windows, while others had brick foundations and brick hearths. They often served as both housing and the location of specialized manufacturing, such as tailoring or cooking.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁷ Lounsbury, *An Illustrated Glossary*, 300. See also Edward A. Chappell, "Housing Slavery" in Carson and Lounsbury, *The Chesapeake House*, 156-178; Fraser D. Neiman, "Sub-Floor Pits and Slavery in Eighteenth- and Early Nineteenth-Century Virginia." Paper presented at the 30th Annual Meeting of the Society for Historical Archaeology, Corpus Christi, Texas, 1997.

¹⁶⁸ "The size of the typical quarter derives from the dimensions of 35 quarters in Saint Mary's County, Md., 1798, from the Federal Assessment, data supplied by Cary Carson, from which comes the 48-by-16-foot quarter;" the "double Negro house" was approximately 20 x 10 x 6 feet, divided into two rooms, or 32 x 14 feet divided into two rooms, typically 16 foot square rooms divided by a central fireplace; Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 106, 108; Utopia quarter: timber framed houses (3), two being 12x28 feet with one hearth, one being 15.5x36 feet with two rooms and a small shed addition; Individual families = one room structures, 12x16 feet; Multiple families = 19x42 feet to 16x24 feet with two or three room partitions (i.e. one room in each building for each family, similar in size to single family homes); Utopia Quarter was 20x32 feet with two small additions and ephemeral chimney evidence of wattle and daub, likely on a gable end; Rich Neck Quarter was 20 x 30 feet with central brick based chimney dividing two rooms; Walsh, *From Calabar to Carter's Grove*, 90, 103, 181, 198; Morgan, *Slavery and Servitude in Colonial North America*, 81; Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 102. Philip Morgan discovered significant variation in his comparison of large and small plantations in the eighteenth-century piedmont and tidewater regions of Virginia. The smallest slave structure measured seven by eight feet and the largest twenty-two by fifty-four feet, although the larger structures likely housed many more slaves than their smaller counterparts. The average quarter housed between three and four slaves in approximately 150 to 250 square feet of living space.

There were variations based on slave status as well. As an example, a "privileged slave" on a different plantation in the eighteenth century might live in a house measuring twelve by ten feet, framed with wood sills and brick underpinning, lathed and filled walls, a loft, raised floor, and a door lock. On many farms and plantations in the mid- and late seventeenth century, though, slave quarters were nearly indistinguishable from other buildings, including the landowner's home. The use of brick in the construction of manor houses during this period is more significant for this reason as it brought even greater contrast between the two building types, the elite further distancing themselves from others by grouping non-elites with the materials and construction methods used in their homes.¹⁶⁹

Only rarely does an account describe the contrast between the owner's residence and the collection of other buildings, including quarters, that existed around it. In one instance, a traveler in Virginia during the late seventeenth century described the living conditions and separation of plantation servants, slaves, and owners, writing:

Some people in this country are comfortably housed... Whatever their rank, and I know not why, they build only two rooms with some closets on the ground floor, and two rooms in the attic above; but they build several like this, according to their means. They build also a separate kitchen, a separate house for the Christian slaves, some for the Negro slaves, and several to dry the tobacco, so that when you come to the home of a person of some means, you think you are entering a fairly large village.¹⁷⁰

If Lewis Burwell II's manor house served as the centerpiece of his plantation landscape design, his slave quarters played a crucial role alongside this architectural expression of personal power and knowledge. Situated just to the west of the brick

¹⁶⁹ Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 111.

¹⁷⁰ Durand de Dauphine, *A Huguenot Exile in Virginia, or Voyages of a Frenchman exiled for his Religion with a description of Virginia and Maryland* Gilbert Chinard, editor, (New York, 1934): 102.

manor house, the two buildings stood in stark contrast to one another. Brick versus frame walls, deeply laid foundations versus ground laid sills, over 8000 square feet spread across multiple floors and a full cellar versus less than 640 square feet over a single floor, garret, and a small subfloor pit or root cellar. Most important, though, were the residents. At the turn of the century, the manor house may have served as an entertainment house, the Burwell's residence in a smaller brick building just to the east.¹⁷¹ The slave quarter, residence for as few as four or perhaps as many as ten or more enslaved Africans, provided shelter for laborers and possibly other support functions, perhaps for the events held at this venue.¹⁷² As an element of display that connected the manor house with the surrounding environment, but also as a productive asset to the plantation, its location and its appearance communicated a controlled and efficient agricultural operation sustaining the political and social position of one of the colony's leaders. The intended audience of Lewis Burwell II's peers and visitors to the plantation, but also his servants and his slaves, would see and understand the contrasting size, materials, and construction of these two buildings. The enslaved Africans, though, would view and live within this landscape and these buildings in ways Burwell never intended.

The archaeological evidence can be used to identify more than the footprint of a slave quarter, its square footage, height, width, depth, heating source, window and door placement, room division and other physical elements. Interpretation of these

¹⁷¹ Carson, "Plantation Housing," 86-114.

¹⁷² The size of the quarter, its proximity to the manor house, its period of use, and the presence of initially a single subfloor pit, when compared to similar quarters, confirms that it was not a general quarter for male slaves, as might be found elsewhere on the plantation during this period. More subfloor pits would have suggested greater numbers of occupants and likely more groups of slaves, whether individuals or families. See Patricia Samford, "The Archaeology of African-American Slavery and Material Culture," in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series, 53 (1996), 1: 87-114; Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 111.

observable elements can result in estimates of building's occupations, the materials employed in construction and repair, and possibly the identity and vocation of the builders and residents. The archaeological evidence can also speak to the craftsmanship of the builders, daily routine of the residents, and religious significance of the building. Evidence of architectural embellishment, patterns of refuse disposal, and artifact assemblages placed within specific areas of the quarter, yet unmentioned in the surviving documentation, can reflect agency, personal and group identity, and ritual or spiritual significance. For instance, acknowledging the quality of a building's craftsmanship can lead to a better understanding of the builder's concerns over the costs and benefits related to efficient design. It can also lead to more subjective interpretations of a hierarchy of enslaved Africans within the plantation as well as a degree of personal pride in manufacturing. The evidence can reveal an emotional quotient to the consideration of buildings and their surroundings, especially as symbols of individual, family, and community identity.

One example that best exemplifies the interpretive potential of the archaeological evidence, particularly related to the slave quarter, is how it illuminates the act of construction. The act of building the slave quarter influenced its symbolic nature. Historian Larry Hudson wrote "the work and productive activities preformed by slaves for themselves provided a foundation on which they built their domestic life and community." Pride of craftsmanship and productivity translated into a positive sense of self, reflected daily in the form of the slave quarter. The sense of pride was not founded in the world of the elite merchant-planter, although it need not be absent from it. Rather, the essential consideration is the sense of pride within the world of

the enslaved African and his or her peers. Status as a productive member of the enslaved African workforce likely added to the prestige and honor carpenters, laborers, and joiners felt for themselves and elevated their position in the eyes of others, further encouraging social stratification within the plantation's slave population.¹⁷³

Historians and archaeologists generally believe that enslaved Africans constructed their own quarters, but there is significant debate over the extent to which slaves influenced the design and selection of materials. Within this debate there is also a controversy over whether some architectural modifications were the result of African influence or environmental adaptation. Historian Philip Morgan addressed this concept, using archaeological and historical evidence from the Carolinas and Florida to suggest the survival of African architectural elements in slave quarters. His comparison of these sites with ones in Virginia suggests distinct regional differences that he attributes to the larger numbers of Africans, approximate environmental conditions to Africa, and availability of construction materials similar to Africa that existed in the more southern colonies. The differences were also likely affected by the decreased interaction between slave owners and slaves, the existence of larger communal groups of Africans, or the increased level of independence and self-reliance of slave communities in the low country. These factors contributed to slaves' personalizing their homes in ways that reflected their own identity and countered the

¹⁷³ Larry E. Hudson, *Working Toward Freedom: Slave Society and Domestic Economy in the American South* (Rochester, 1994): vii; Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 306, 392.

interpretation of slave quarters as symbols of their oppression by white slave owners.¹⁷⁴

The lack of non-European architectural elements in either the archaeological or historical record, relating to both buildings and landscape, along with the predominance of log structures over mud walled structures might appear to reflect "a more thoroughly assimilated slave population" in the Chesapeake, but this incorrectly presupposes a one-to-one relationship between identity and material culture. While slaves in South Carolina and the Caribbean may have had a greater opportunity to incorporate African influence into their architecture, the identification of these elements in the more heavily monitored Chesapeake may require a less value-laden approach towards the architectural remains and the artifacts that are found in association with them. An alternative interpretation of architectural symbols, one that privileges the enslaved African perspective of both their home and the slave owner's home as well, complicates any understanding of the plantation landscape. As slaves were often responsible for constructing the manor house, they may have introduced carefully hidden elements of their own cultures into the design of the building. Just as easily, they could define a building devoid of any African influence in terms of their own choosing, derived from their experience in Africa or in Virginia.¹⁷⁵

Lorena Walsh's study of enslaved Africans owned by the Burwell family includes the same assumption about their quarters that many historians have written before her, namely that "the [slave] owners decided where the quarters would be located and how they were to be fashioned" with the slaves having "little control over

¹⁷⁴ Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 117-118.

¹⁷⁵ *ibid.*, 118-119; Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 364.

materials and design." But her interpretation goes further. She noticed many similarities between quarters in Virginia and the residences of contemporary Africans in regions where slave traders captured them. Generally, both regions' structures were small, earthfast dwellings whose construction quality varied greatly. The unique modifications, perhaps the placement of windows, the application of daub, the arrangement of furniture, or other factors wholly unimportant to the white property owner, marked the enslaved African's influence on their home, and also the home of their master. For the enslaved Africans owned by Lewis Burwell II, who largely originated in the Senegambian region of Africa, furnishings were traditionally a small part of their household. Relatively minimal in number and type compared to the households of their merchant-planter owners, they included necessary tools, weapons, cooking and storage pots, wooden bowls, and mats with only minor differences exhibiting wealth or higher status.¹⁷⁶ In this instance, the subtle inclusion of an elevated bed might communicate class differences between slaves. Identifiable by members of the enslaved population, but invisible to the rest of the colonial world, these modifications communicated the power of the enslaved to affect their own lives, to subvert their owner's attempts to manipulate them, and, in effect, to manipulate their surrounding landscape to their own benefit.¹⁷⁷

The proximity of an enslaved African's sleeping area to the manor house may appear to correlate with their occupation as a house servant or function in support of activities related to the owner's family or administration of the estate.¹⁷⁸ This

¹⁷⁶ Walsh, *From Calabar to Carter's Grove*, 59.

¹⁷⁷ *ibid.*, 181, 102.

¹⁷⁸ Our understanding of what roles enslaved Africans played as servants, whether in support of entertaining others, maintaining carriages/traveling horses, or in keeping house is relatively

positioning follows the same logic as the distant quarters wherein spaces for sleeping were chosen to minimize the distance between the residents and their activities or the persons they supported. Other considerations also influenced these locations. The arrangement of buildings within close proximity to the manor house might function within a formalized designed landscape, sacrificing some efficiency (moving the kitchen further from the house, for instance). At the same time, a desire to maintain a compact formal space that maximized available acreage for agricultural operations and other tasks also influenced the placement of buildings.

Archaeologists have suggested yet another interpretation concerning the power of enslaved Africans to influence the placement and construction of their homes. Ywone Edwards-Ingram believes that "enslaved people inserted their own concepts of space and approaches to the cultural landscape."¹⁷⁹ Her research suggests that archaeologists and historians should consider the possibility that the location and condition of the quarters may have resulted from a need to accommodate the requests and requirements of nursing mothers and caretakers of children, maximizing labor productivity. This concept is based on documentary evidence of slave owners' concerns for the well-being of pregnant and nursing slaves and their desire to locate near other pregnant and nursing slaves, or slaves raising small children. Edwards-Ingram's work reflects conditions in the eighteenth century, when the birthrates of enslaved Africans increased notably, but this trend may have begun at the end of the seventeenth century, particularly on the plantations of the elite. While elite merchant-

undeveloped for late seventeenth-century Virginia. It is likely that some continued to sleep in the manor house, although in separate rooms, passages, or unheated cellars/garrets, ensuring segregation but close proximity to perform the necessary tasks at hand.

¹⁷⁹ Ywone Edwards-Ingram, "African American Medicine and the Social Relations of Slavery," in Charles E. Orser, ed., *Race and the Archaeology of Identity* (Salt Lake City, 2001), 34-53.

planters could more easily add to their workforce during this period through the purchase of additional slaves, the concentrated presence of enslaved Africans on their plantations made these properties the most obvious exemplars of the potential of natural increase to sustain and increase this population. Recovering evidence of this archaeologically or in surviving documents, though, may be impossible, and particularly at Fairfield plantation due to how few written sources remain. Albeit the close proximity of this quarter to the main house, its early date, and the likely concentration of other similar buildings nearby encourages more hypothesis such as this and further testing thereof.¹⁸⁰

Ultimately, slave quarters represented the conflict between slaves and slave owners over the control of human and physical property. Slave owners viewed these buildings primarily as structures to provide human property with shelter from the elements, a place to cook food and sleep. It functioned as a specific location to congregate, limiting some of their activities and making it easier to monitor them. While enslaved Africans acknowledged that slave owners controlled much of the plantation, a slave's home, even when shared with others, provided a modicum of privacy and security, a haven from the outside world and, in a sense, their own space.¹⁸¹

Take as an example the subfloor pit or root cellar. Underground storage pits within the quarter, groups of them nearly underlying the entire floor in some instances,

¹⁸⁰ Archaeological testing of the yard area surrounding the quarter excavation at Fairfield plantation revealed both substantial evidence of earlier and later activities at this location (including a likely earlier brick clamp and a later slave residence) and extensive contemporary use of the area, including additional buildings to the north and south. For much of the period from the late seventeenth through mid-nineteenth centuries, this area could be considered a work yard, populated by numerous buildings with a heavily used trash midden extending to the west.

¹⁸¹ Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution*, 292; Laurie A. Wilkie, *Creating Freedom: Material Culture and African American Identity at Oakley Plantation, Louisiana, 1840-1950* (Baton Rouge, 2000).

were typically three to four feet square and situated near hearths. Often with wooden or brick divisions or lining and sand bottoms, enslaved Africans used them to store food and personal possessions. While occasionally acknowledged by slave owners in their writings, they are more frequently left unmentioned. Although evidence exists for other ethnic groups using similar pits, including white, nineteenth- and twentieth-century Appalachian tenant farmers, many historians and archaeologists view these modifications to structures as "peculiar to slave households" and "a definite African-Virginia modification" within the context of the colonial Chesapeake. Out of sight, beneath covering boards in the clay dirt floor, or between the joists if the quarter had an elevated wood floor, and over time associated with both individuals and families, their existence stood in stark contrast to the idea that the slave owner controlled every element of his human property's life.¹⁸²

The root cellar operated as a private place for the enslaved African, a meaning that could extend to cover the entire building and surrounding yard. When a slave owner or overseer entered the slave quarter uninvited, they violated the privacy of the enslaved Africans living there. White, male slave owners made clear their control over the property and the bodies of slaves when they entered the quarter in search of stolen items, to check for runaway slaves, or to rape female slaves. The creation and use of subfloor pits exhibits one attempt to subvert these assaults, modifying their space, expressing their identity to other enslaved Africans through their knowledge of

¹⁸² Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 116; Patricia M. Samford, "'Strong is the Bond of Kinship: West African-Style Ancestor Shrines and Subfloor Pits on African-American Quarters" in *Historical Archaeology: Identity Formation and the Interpretation of Ethnicity* edited by Maria Franklin and Garrett Fesler (Richmond, 1999), 71-92; Walsh, *From Calabar to Carter's Grove*, 103, 181. The number of subfloor pits decreased from the late seventeenth century to the mid-nineteenth century, a trend that Fraser Neiman and others have linked to the changing pattern of housing enslaved Africans from barracks with individuals often segregated by sex towards nucleated family units where sharing a single storage area would have been more common. Neiman, "Sub-Floor Pits and Slavery."

and use of these spaces. It also represents a point of negotiation between slave and master, though. While out of sight and not easily accessible to those who infrequently moved through these buildings, slave owners tolerated subfloor pits which they understood as spaces that functioned to support slave self-sufficiency. Their presence alleviated the need for general access to food storage and further confined movement within areas of higher concern, such as the cellars of the manor house.

Enslaved Africans manipulated slave owners' ignorance of the alternative functions of subfloor pits, using them to hide important objects, denying others' power over their portable possessions. An extension of the interpretation places this act of landscape creation within the world of spirit belief and enslaved African religions, specifically the use of these subterranean features as spirit shrines or altars. The most recent and perhaps most complete discussion of this interpretation was proposed by archaeologist Patricia Samford.¹⁸³ A thorough and detailed analysis incorporating archaeological, oral history, document, and landscape evidence from Virginia and Igbo-focused region of present day south Nigeria along Africa's west coast, Samford argues that specific assemblages of artifacts recovered from particular contexts within subfloor pits represent connections with ancestral spirits and deities who possessed the power to influence the present day and the future welfare of those who worshipped them. The assemblages consisted of a wide range of different objects made from different materials, but shared certain similarities such as relative completeness as well as colors and symbols important to recorded African spiritual traditions, in this case Igbo peoples. While Samford admits that "there was a high degree of crossover

¹⁸³ Samford, *Subfloor Pits and the Archaeology of Slavery*, 149-173. See also, Christopher Fennell, *Crossroads and Cosmologies: Diasporas and Ethnogenesis in the New World* (Gainesville, 2007).

between spiritual objects and items used in everyday life" thereby complicating any interpretation, the confluence of so many lines of evidence regarding the meaning of these items and the use of these subfloor pits is intriguing and worth discussing among the potential uses for these elements of the black landscape.

Shrines, as one element of a spirituality we might assume each enslaved African considered essential to their everyday life, connected people with their past, with the supernatural, and with other enslaved Africans who shared in their beliefs. It strengthened kinship ties and demonstrated to others a vital part of their identity. The shrines required physical interaction, particularly maintenance, otherwise negative consequences from the lack of respect communicated through an unkempt subfloor pit might result in offending the spirit world. The belief for some that, through ancestor veneration, enslaved Africans might gain greater control over aspects of their lives via spiritual devotion is not unique to a specific religion in Africa (or the world). But in contrast to European beliefs, enslaved Africans embraced of holistic view of the world that did not separate life into spiritual and secular components. They emphasized the communal over the individual, understanding their landscape as influenced by both the past and the present, spirits of their ancestors existing alongside them in the contemporary world and having power over their daily lives.¹⁸⁴

Within the slave owner's landscape and enslaved African's landscape, quarters served multiple functions, including sleeping area, communal space, ritual center, and

¹⁸⁴ G. C. Logan, T.W. Boder, and L.D. Jones, *1991 Archaeological Excavations at the Charles Carroll House in Annapolis, Maryland* (College Park, 1992); Stevan Pullins, Joseph B. Jones, J.R. Underwood, K.A. Ettinger, and David W. Lewes, *Southall's Quarter: Archaeology at an 18th-Century Slave Quarter in James City County, Data Recovery at Site 44JC969 Associated with the Proposed Route 199 Project, James City County, Virginia*. (Williamsburg, 2003); Timothy Ruppel, Jessica Neuwirth, Mark P. Leone, and Gladys-Marie Fry, "Hidden in View: African Spiritual Practices in North American Landscapes" in *Antiquity* 77 (2003): 321-335.

manufacturing area. Artisan slaves practiced their carpentry, ironwork, and other crafts while at the same time administering traditional medicines and magic.

Archaeologists have found evidence of these activities in the specific fragments of European and African manufactured goods recovered from symbolic locations within slave residences. These items are interpreted as appropriated by African and African-American slaves to serve as talismans or charms. The type of artifact and their placement related directly to African medicinal and spiritual practices recorded in oral traditions and in rare historical documentation.

The covert practice of ancestral traditions extended to include actions related to their own personal experience and history, including the woodworking, tailoring, and cooking that housed, clothed, and fed their masters, but utilized knowledge gained from life before enslavement and their survival strategies that developed because of their enslavement. This includes the placement of what might appear to be mundane artifacts of everyday life in discrete, often hidden parts of houses and workplaces. The common appearance, to Europeans and particularly Christians, of objects associated with little or no spiritual significance made it easy for these expressions of identity to remain undisturbed if discovered. It can also make them nearly invisible to archaeologists. Archaeologist Chris Fennel provides one example, explaining that "white objects such as clay marbles or ash could be used to invoke a color symbolism connoting supplication to ancestors and the spirit world." He continues, explaining that "Crossed-line motifs," commonly found as decoration on European ceramics of the colonial period, could exist within the black landscape different than their manufacturers intend and for some enslaved Africans "frequently communicated

invocations of aid for the protective capacities of spiritual forces to cross a boundary into the domain of the living.¹⁸⁵

On rare occasion archaeologists have recovered evidence of enslaved Africans burying the dead beneath their quarters, including at the site of Rich Neck plantation, sometime home of Philip Ludwell I during the late seventeenth century (see Chapter 6).¹⁸⁶ Excavations in Maryland, Virginia, Barbados, and elsewhere in the New World resulted in more archaeological references to this phenomenon than historical references. The practice reflects the great diversity of African origins for slaves in the Chesapeake region as it was commonly associated with tribal groups from throughout West Africa. Through this and other symbolic and ritual transformations of the black landscape, the quarter no longer operated simply as shelter.¹⁸⁷

Enslaved Africans infused their buildings with symbols of religious belief, social hierarchy, and personal identity. They also brought meaning to this landscape through their actions. Archaeological evidence suggests one such action took place

¹⁸⁵ Christopher C. Fennell, "Early African America: Archaeological Studies of Significance and Diversity," in *The Journal of Archaeological Research* 19 (2011):1–49, quote: 36; Kenneth L. Brown and Doreen C. Cooper, "Structural Continuity in an African-American Slave and Tenant Community" in *Historical Archaeology* 24 (1990), 4: 7-19; Claudia C. Holland, "Tenant Farms of the Past, Present, and Future: An Ethno-archaeological View" in *Historical Archaeology* 24 (1990), 4: 60-69. Fennell, *Crossroads and Cosmologies*; Mark P. Leone and Gladys-Marie Fry with Timothy Ruppel, "Spirit Management among Americans of African Descent" in *Race and the Archaeology of Identity*, edited by Charles E. Orser (Salt Lake City, 2001): 143-157; Akinwumi Ogundiran and Toyin Falola, ed., *Archaeology of Atlantic Africa and the African Diaspora* (Bloomington, 2007); see also, African Diaspora Archaeology Network, *Newsletter*. [<http://www.diaspora.illinois.edu/newsletter.html>, accessed 9 October 2013].

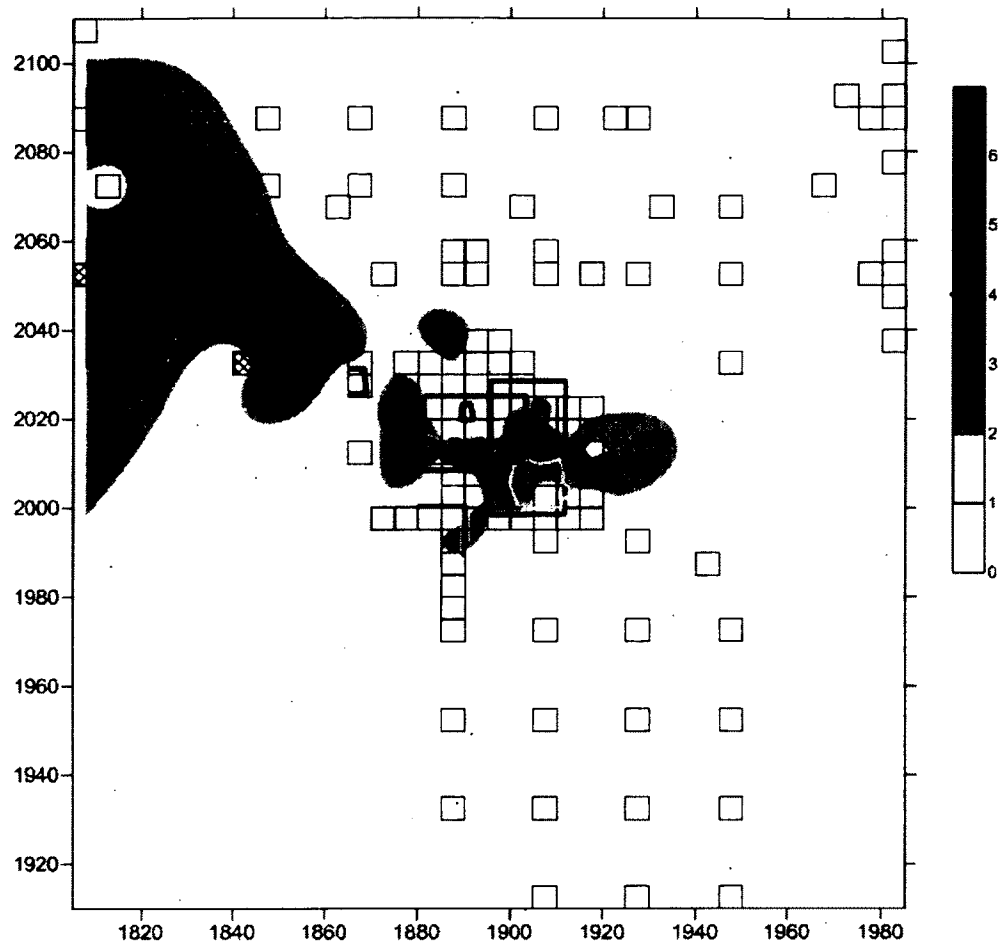
¹⁸⁶ David Muraca, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Staff Archaeologist, Personal Communication, 1999.

¹⁸⁷ Jerome S. Handler, *Plantation Slavery in Barbados: An Archaeological and Historical Investigation* (Cambridge, 1978): 141, 196, 211; Al Luckenbach, Anne Arundel County Archaeologist, Personal Communication, 2003. D.V. Armstrong & M.L. Fleischman, "House-yard Burials of Enslaved Laborers in Eighteenth-Century Jamaica," in *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 7 (2003), 1: 33 – 65. Armstrong and Fleischman state specifically that house-yard burial practices from sites in the Caribbean and North America "cannot be tied directly to a specific West African ethnic group or to "whole" pan-African practices, nor should we expect them to be. However, they do reflect generalized West African cultural influences"(39).

near the Fairfield manor house where an enslaved occupant of the nearby quarter engaged in the manufacture of lead objects. Analysis of materials recovered from excavations within the yard area surrounding the quarter revealed an unusual number of lead fragments. Whether in the form of shot, small circular discs, or melted scrap, this material predominates in these areas and match the perimeter of the building. Its use during this period is confirmed both by their relative association with the slave quarter's yard area and by contemporary diagnostic artifacts that follow similar patterns, later artifacts appearing in extensive and nearly random disposal patterns reflecting the abandonment of the quarter and the areas use in the mid-eighteenth-century as a trash midden.

The importance of lead connects with many aspects of everyday life for both the enslaved and the free occupants of the plantation. The recovery of lead shot, projectiles fired from a musket or pistol of the period, links the enslaved Africans occupying the quarter with firearms and, while it may appear surprising that they possessed weapons, enslaved laborers frequently augmented the rations they received from their masters, hunting animals in the evenings and in the few daylight hours unoccupied by other work. Melting lead objects, pouring them into molds, and forming them into shot proved more efficient and less costly than purchasing shot, but required scrap lead or the acquisition of discarded (or stolen) lead objects to initiate this process.¹⁸⁸ While the end of the process may not have brought the ire of the plantation owner, how it began may have met with their disapproval or perhaps anger.

¹⁸⁸ To date no molds have been recovered from the slave quarter excavations. Molds were highly valued and less likely to be discarded or lost accidentally.



Concentrations of lead fragments found during excavations of the home quarter.
The Fairfield Foundation, White Marsh, Virginia.

In fact, the cultural act of turning a stolen or discarded lead object, at one time purchased and used by the plantation owner, into something that enslaved Africans reshaped and repurposed for their own means, particularly as objects of violence and power (although not necessarily against the plantation owner), is symbolic of the black landscape and re-orient this object and its area of manufacture.

A second example from Fairfield plantation further illustrates how enslaved Africans may have used and presented the slave quarter within the black landscape. The Fairfield quarter fits within a significant and growing corpus of research that

seeks to illuminate the relationship between enslaved Africans, their houses, and the landscapes connecting them and the rest of the plantation.¹⁸⁹ From the day construction finished through the day before its demolition, the most frequent users and occupants of the quarter defined their identity partly through association with this place. But others also established relationships with these buildings, particularly those who built it. The opportunity to take ownership of the building, an association born through labor, cutting down the trees, hauling the logs, sawing the structural beams, and splitting the shingles, grew into a long-term attachment based on the memories of these actions. The sensory experiences of the smell of fresh cut wood, the feel of rough surfaces, the scars from cuts, and the subtle darkening of aging wood connected people to place. The knowledge of construction methods and the access to tools and materials further legitimized the act that engrained it within the black landscape.

Beyond construction, the act of living within and working in and around these buildings created a strong association between people and place. The daily rituals of sleeping, eating, and working often modified this landscape in small but meaningful ways. Enslaved Africans discarded the remains of finished meals and swept away the debris of broken pots, accidentally dropped buttons, and the generally accumulated trash of everyday life. Whether they hauled a bucket of this material out to the nearby ravine or another convenient disposal place, or used a broom to sweep the smaller pieces out the door and into the front yard, these once whole and valued objects, already a part of their identity, transformed into the unwanted debris of a past time.

¹⁸⁹ Whitney Battle-Baptiste, "'In this here place': Interpreting Enslaved Homeplaces" in *Archaeology of Atlantic Africa and the African Diaspora*, edited by Akinwumi Ogundiran and Toyin Falola (Bloomington, 2007): 233-248; Barbara Heath and Jack Gary, eds., *Jefferson's Poplar Forest: Unearthing a Virginia Plantation* (Gainesville, 2012); Galle and Young, *Engendering African American Archaeology*.

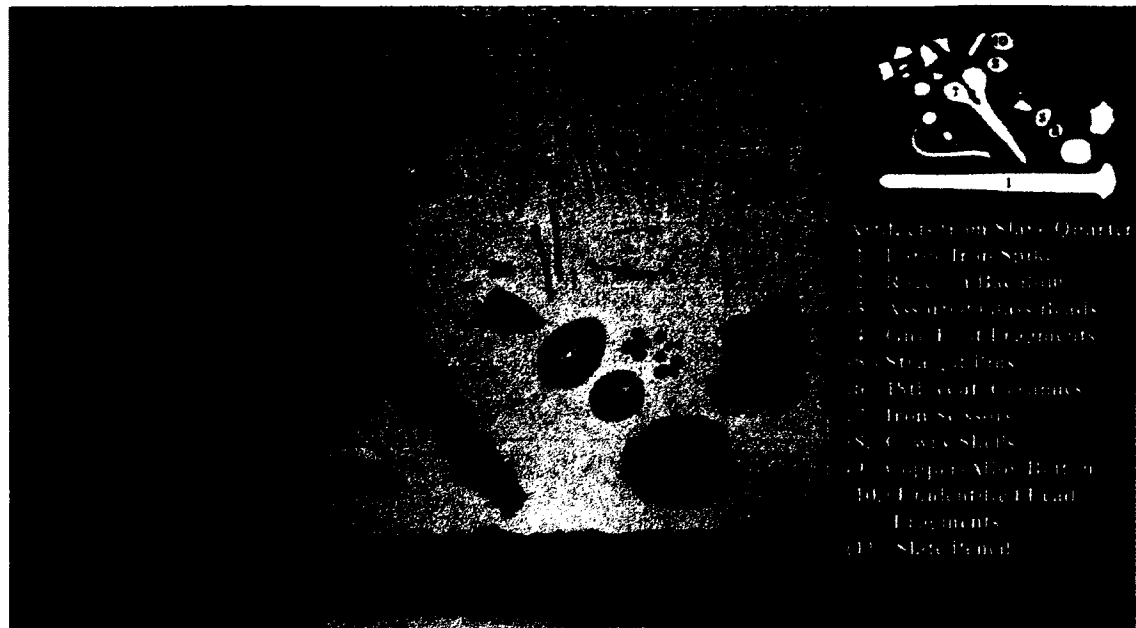
Alternatively, these seemingly commonplace objects as well as fences, trees, and even carefully placed rocks and other material culture, that may, again, be clearly present but meaningfully invisible to those who did not share a belief in its significance, represented boundaries for both human and spiritual forces. The very act of sweeping demonstrated control over space, communicating identity through the select retaining of elements and the removal of others.¹⁹⁰

These actions, frequently attributed across cultural lines, represent unique and interesting moments particular to enslaved Africans. These actions, visible in the archaeological record, can be interpreted as symbolic of personal preferences for a "clean" environment. Alternatively, these actions can represent agency, demonstrating the power of enslaved Africans to control this small part of the plantation landscape. Viewing the landscape in this manner highlights the many diverse and overlapping interpretations reflected in the archaeological evidence. These interpretations reposition how we view the enslaved Africans and their owners during this period as active agents in the formation of a plantation culture, responsive to the diverse origins of all groups, operating within an oppressive system.¹⁹¹

A third example from the archaeological evidence from Fairfield plantation focuses on the material culture found within the home quarter's subfloor pit. The remarkable assemblage includes a slate pencil, ninety-seven copper-alloy pins, twenty-six colored and polychrome glass beads, two white cowrie shell beads, pewter

¹⁹⁰ Gundaker, Grey, and Judith McWillie, eds. *No Space Hidden: The Spirit of African American Yard Work*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2005; Roderick A. McDonald, *Economy and Material Culture of Slaves: Goods and Chattels on the Sugar Plantations of Jamaica and Louisiana* (Baton Rouge, 1993). See also, Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 123.

¹⁹¹ Fesler, "Excavating the Spaces and Interpreting the Places," 44-45, n. 50; See also Sydney Wilfred Mintz, *Caribbean Transformations* (Chicago, 1974); Stephan Palmié, "Introduction" in *Slave Cultures and the Cultures of Slavery*, edited by Stephan Palmié (Knoxville, 1995): iv-xlvi.



Artifacts recovered from the living surface of the subfloor pit (Feature 8).
The Fairfield Foundation, White Marsh, Virginia.

buttons, iron scissors, a nine-inch wrought iron spike, small fragments of Chinese porcelain (6), tin-glazed earthenware (59), and locally-produced colonoware (2), a bone comb, a gunflint and a flint strike-a-light, and a raccoon baculum.¹⁹² The artifacts represent the complexity of life for enslaved Africans and their power to create and manipulate the landscape. Found primarily along the floor of the subfloor pit, these discarded or lost objects date from throughout the building's use and each connects with an aspect of enslaved African life.¹⁹³

¹⁹² A total of 2,582 artifacts were recovered from the 50% sample (south half) of the three-layer feature. This count is dominated by the presence of egg shell fragments (1,742). The bottom layer was composed of darker soils and interpreted as a "living surface" contemporary with the use of the pit (and building) rather than filling after the building's destruction (or the pits replacement/abandonment). A full inventory is accessible for the "F008" at the DAACS website (<http://www.daacs.org/sites/fairfield-quarter/>).

¹⁹³ This context, Feature 8 Layer C, south half, was sealed by the accumulated debris of the building's destruction (Layers A and B) and undisturbed by the agricultural processes that mixed the artifacts of the yard with the trash midden which accumulated after the building's removal.

The scissors, pins, and different colored beads, all commonly associated with sewing or tailoring, represent the actions necessary to repair or create clothing, and the related selection of fabrics and colors which illustrate personal preferences and a sense of personal display. The cowrie shells, including whole and halved examples with the front and back sections separated, indicate that the building occupants converted these mollusks into objects of personal adornment, expressing their personal style through materials (and memories) brought with them from Africa. Recovered from slave quarter sites across the region, including Utopia II and those referenced earlier, Patricia Samford adds that they "may have also reinforced African cultural identities" through the display of specific colors with potential spiritual meaning.

The slate pencil, the spike, the pottery, and the baculum indicate the level of education (reading/writing/math), access to finer ceramics, the production of ceramics, and diet. But each could connect with a distinctly different aspect of individual action and identity, whether religious, symbolic, or purely functional. For instance, the slate pencil in and of itself cannot testify to the level of education the user possessed, or even if they used it to write, but in a context with items also associated with objects testifying to personal responsibility (gunflints) and limited autonomy (pottery), the potential for it to represent opportunities once thought outside of the lives of enslaved Africans is worthy of discussion. Additionally, the raccoon baculum as part of a larger assemblage of animal bone is most easily interpreted with those food bone, speaking to the diet and act of hunting for enslaved Africans. Within the context of this subfloor pit, it represents the only raccoon bone identified. The context reframes the discussion of this suddenly unique artifact. Did it represent a spiritual or ritual

display of virility, power over the natural world, or another potential significance as yet unrecovered by scholars of the African Diaspora? The recovery of these bones from similar contexts, whether at Mount Vernon's House for Families near the manor house or Utopia's distant field quarters, adds further credence to their role beyond diet and encourages their consideration individually and as part of an assemblage that might provide insight into lives of persons absent from the historical record and offer the opportunity to question how their actions affected the landscape they created.

Archaeological evidence from slave quarter excavations on Burwell plantations in James City and York Counties led historian Lorena Walsh to believe that a slave's material conditions did not change significantly as he or she entered the eighteenth century. She wrote "the underground record speaks most clearly to the small improvements in living standards that the slaves wrought on their own initiative."¹⁹⁴ The variety of meats and vegetables increased, suggesting an investment in selling surplus goods in nearby emerging urban markets. The African-style or imported European-made jewelry found during excavations connected the enslaved with income from these activities and entry into the regional market. The recovery of animal bone from more than twenty-eight identifiable species, including Blue Crab, Freshwater Catfish, Bobwhite, Robin, Eastern Gray Squirrel, Raccoon, and the more common chicken, sheep, pig, goat, and cow, document the connection between enslaved Africans and the natural world, reflecting a diet both diverse and distinct.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁴ Walsh, *From Calabar to Carter's Grove*, 200.

¹⁹⁵ Dr. Joanne Bowen, a faunal archaeologist with the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, and her staff identified 5463 fragments of animal bone to species level from the assemblage recovered from Feature 8. An inventory and analysis of this material, sponsored by the Digital Archaeological Archive of Comparative Slavery (DAACS) is on file with the Fairfield Foundation, White Marsh, Virginia.

These materials reflected actions, agency, and identity in deeply complex ways we are only beginning to understand.

Take, for example, the recovery of plate glass mirror fragments from the same subfloor pit. While the easiest interpretation of this artifact type is to see it as its manufacturer intended, suggesting a slave's concern for personal appearance, alternative interpretations illustrate its role in African spirituality, specifically healing and conjuring.¹⁹⁶ Archaeologists recovered other common household goods, including crockery, food storage containers, and eating utensils, along with an occasional teacup, saucer, or punch bowl, potentially used beyond the ways other than those prevailing among the merchant-planter elite. The important lesson to take away from this is to see objects as functioning in multiple ways, to de-privilege the perspective of the manufacturer without forgetting that this was also a potential (and likely) use of the object.

It is possible that enslaved Africans stole these items or received them as gifts from their owners. Philip Morgan's analysis of slave quarter space concurs with Walsh's conclusion, suggesting that "living space per slave probably improved little, if at all." The use of these metrics for gauging quality of life, though, rely heavily on European perceptions of wealth and attitudes towards leisure. Also, the archaeological evidence for slave quarters of the late seventeenth century remains fairly small, leaving a few examples to illustrate a population increasing substantially over this period.¹⁹⁷ The lives of enslaved Africans surely did not improve on a trajectory

¹⁹⁶ Samford, *Subfloor Pits and the Archaeology of Slavery*, 105; Walsh, *From Calabar to Carter's Grove*, 308, n. 36.

¹⁹⁷ Samford, *Subfloor Pits and the Archaeology of Slavery*, 7-8. See also Thomas Jefferson Foundation, *Digital Archaeological Archive of Comparative Slavery*. Charlottesville, [<http://www.daacs.org/>].

towards freedom, but rather the opposite. Slave laws further curtailed rights and attitudes that associate Africans with slavery only solidified. The ability to cope with worsening labor conditions, to resist repeated assaults on their identity, and to physically and psychologically survive should not be underestimated, though, as their experiences informed their actions and their manipulation of the landscape.¹⁹⁸

Another example illustrates how enslaved Africans and white property owners attempted to control access to the quarter and how access changed as the role of the quarter changed. The majority of seventeenth-century people who might see the quarter included the plantation's enslaved Africans, the plantation owner and his family, and white visitors. The first group conceivably had access to the quarter as an integral element of their world, interacting with its occupants while performing the tasks required by the plantation owner. While their actions within the quarter area might be questioned, their association with this "black" space may have resulted in greater freedom to move in and out of this area. The plantation owner and his family may have had the greatest freedom to move in and out of this space unquestioned, but their unfamiliarity with the quarter's interior may have resulted in a social barrier that limited how frequently and under what conditions they engaged with the building and its occupants. The quarter was least accessible to visitors, including the plantation owner's peers and his neighbors. In the case of this quarter at Fairfield plantation, a substantial fence limited their access specifically to the forecourt of the manor house, a waiting area with a carefully controlled perspective on the quarter and the work yard

¹⁹⁸ Walsh, *From Calabar to Carter's Grove*, 200; Morgan focuses on square footage of slave space, not necessarily size of structure, whether it be quarter, cabin, duplex, or barrack. Some assumptions could be made though based on the size of the archaeological footprint and the suspected time period of its existence (coupled with an assessment of the landowners status and the buildings location the plantation) whether it housed a certain number of slaves; Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 112.

around it. The visitor remained at a distance, viewing the space without physically engaging with it.

To the extent that the plantation owner could control it, the space in and around the quarter represented a lesson to peers and visitors, instructing them on the proper housing and treatment of enslaved Africans, the efficient management of the plantation, and the position of the quarter, its occupants, and the visitors within the social hierarchy. Whether others received this message in the way intended is not known. Over time, and through its transition from idea to construction and into use, the quarter communicated something different than intended to the property owner, most powerfully through the actions of enslaved Africans, assuming the owner cared. The swept yard area, the hidden root cellar, and the seen and unseen activities that surrounded the quarter created an environment that spoke to labor, to life as a plantation's worker rather than its owner, and to private personal space - whether they had the power to enter or not. It was limiting through its unfamiliarity and through its social condition. But to the enslaved African, it was home. It was familiar space, built by slaves, occupied by slaves, and a part of the black landscape which transcended its "ownership" by the elite merchant-planter.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁹ My understanding of the phenomenology of landscape, particularly within the colonial plantation, is informed by the work of Bachelard as it applies to the "poetics of space" and the lived experience of architecture. The incorporation of emotions of the moment of engagement, the fluid meanings, and the manipulation of meaning by disparate groups relates closely to his fascination with the architecture of the imagination. I am also influenced and find common ground with Dell Upton's use of performance theory and its connection to all forms of material culture as it draws attention to the human creation and communication of ideas through objects and their relationship with human behavior. Further, these concepts have powerful relevance in the present and in our interpretation (and appropriation) of the past. Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space* (Boston, 2010); Dell Upton, "Toward a Performance Theory of Vernacular Architecture: Early Tidewater Virginia as a Case Study," in *Folklore Forum* (1979): 173-196; Dell Upton, *Holy Things and Profane: Anglican Parish Churches in Colonial Virginia* (Cambridge: 1986) 99-162. See also, Thomas J. Schlereth, *Material Culture Studies in America* (Walnut Creek, 1999): 62.

The black landscape changed with the passing of time, as did the many other overlapping plantation landscapes. From one generation to the next, as more enslaved Africans arrived, as they built new slave quarters and cleared new fields for tobacco, slavery changed, too. This occurred at the same time as the elite merchant planters focused on increased agricultural efficiency and plantation infrastructure. The transition to incorporating an expanding agricultural focus and more diverse semi-industrial endeavors forced a new conceptualization of roles for enslaved laborers, the construction of new buildings, and the rearrangement of space.

This transition occurred first on the plantations of the colony's elite merchant-planters. Lewis Burwell II and his peers could afford the risk, shifting a portion of their resources and their laborers' time to new activities with less certain profitability. Proper planning and a bit of luck reduced risk and these investments would potentially ensure the plantation's long-term economic success. By the mid-eighteenth century, plantation owners such as Landon Carter of Sabine Hall documented enslaved field workers operating in positions far beyond those envisioned by elite merchant planters of the mid-seventeenth century, simultaneously grappling with tobacco, corn, and wheat, working in mills, and supporting the plantation owner's family as if it had always been the way things were done. Over fifty years earlier, Burwell and his cohort ventured first down that path, but their success depended as much on the ability of the enslaved Africans to complete these tasks as it did on the concept.²⁰⁰

Enslaved Africans built the necessary infrastructure, assisted the skilled craftsmen and operators, and continued to perform the everyday agricultural tasks that sustained the plantation, developing experience and skills that, over the course of the

²⁰⁰ Isaac, *Landon Carter's Uneasy Kingdom*.

eighteenth century, redefined the role of the slave in the plantation economy. But the period of experimentation with this system resulted in unanticipated consequences that, at least temporarily, affected other elements of the plantation. One of these included an unexpected labor surplus.

A labor surplus would not have emerged on all plantations at the same time. The initial labor surplus involved a relatively small portion of the plantation's slaves and lasted for only a short period of the annual growing cycle. It only appeared once sufficient numbers of enslaved Africans accomplished certain tasks quicker than expected. Rather than taking the more direct solution of reallocating the smaller surplus towards established needs, such as general maintenance of the existing plantation infrastructure, some elite merchant-planters experimented with repurposing slaves towards new tasks. The leap to constructing brick buildings, significantly expanding infrastructure, and implementing a massive, designed landscape required other events, though, and this process is described further in the Chapter 4.

Through the more complete control of the labor force, the merchant-planter extracted more work through a variety of methods. Working enslaved Africans longer, moving them closer to the fields they worked, and maintaining closer supervision resulted in increased productivity and efficiency. Efforts to raise the rate of natural increase by purchasing more female slaves, while redefining the role of females on the plantation by race rather than gender, provided more substantial benefits to the plantation owner. Men traditionally worked the fields through most of the year, clearing fields, building fences, and cutting firewood during the winter and when weather permitted, but women had focused more on repetitive household tasks

including food preparation, dairying, nursing, gardening, tailoring, and other tasks. The colony's leadership reserved those tasks for European women, but changed the colony's laws to allow enslaved African women to work in the fields alongside men. The elite merchant-planters' purchase of new slaves, dividing them among the established workforce, resulted in further agricultural gains, but delayed the establishment of nucleated family units and the natural increase which might follow.²⁰¹

Accentuating agricultural productivity was likely the primary task for any labor surplus, but it was likely not the only one. One additional task might include expanding the planting, raising, and harvesting of corn and wheat to feed the increasing labor force and livestock. A significant minority also learned skills essential to developing the necessary related infrastructure. Skilled craftsmen oversaw the construction of mills, but the associated laborers, initially a combination of enslaved Africans, indentured servants, and possibly free day laborers, participated to varying degrees. The same could be said of brick making and masonry, road construction, and other infrastructure-related activities. The added advantage, as with any new endeavor, was the experience of having undertaken these projects. The knowledge that came from understanding the time and labor necessary to successfully complete a task often led to repeated implementation, experimentations with efficiency, and teaching these methods to others.

These changes affected the lives of both the elite merchant-planter and the enslaved African, while forever altering the landscape of the plantation.

Understanding these processes, learning these skills, and putting them into action

²⁰¹ Carr, et al., *Robert Cole's World*, 55-75; Coombs, *Building "The Machine,"* 10-11, 75.

demonstrated knowledge and power to others who did not possess these capabilities while building bonds of shared experience with those who did. This effect on the merchant-planter, and specifically on Lewis Burwell II, is covered in the chapter that follows. The effect on the enslaved laborers who existed within this system was equally significant. Enslaved laborers repurposed to new tasks, especially those not bound directly to crops, became part of a new group. With knowledge came elevated status that increased their literal and figurative value, especially as the practice of renting out slaves expanded in the eighteenth century. It also changed their status within the enslaved labor force. It redefined slaves capabilities and heightened demand for them. Just as important, though, it created multiple groups of enslaved workers who might be housed separately and have access to different parts of the plantation as well as places outside of the plantation. It accentuated the existing stratified hierarchy among enslaved Africans.

As some among the work force gained new skills and special treatment, those who did not witnessed an increase in their workload as the number of agricultural labor tasks grew to match new expectations. The number of new buildings, fields, and roads increased and required time and energy of enslaved Africans to maintain them. The success of new agricultural and non-agricultural tasks, initially scheduled for lulls in the established calendar of tobacco monoculture, also increased competition for labor and resources. If the supply of additional agricultural laborers could not meet the demand, the plantation owner was forced to prioritize. This fed directly into the competition for human resources.

One example of this debate involved deciding between expanding agricultural operations or investing in infrastructure improvements. Settling new portions of the home plantation or establishing new quarters on speculative land grants, rather than renting or selling them to recently freed indentured servants, tenant farmers, or immigrants, was a long-term decision with significant ramifications. This task required clearing fields, constructing housing, potentially hiring an overseer or extending the responsibilities of an enslaved African already working on the plantation, and reorganizing existing slave quarters to insure the right combination of experienced and new laborers. Unless the owner shifted an entire slave quarter's workforce from one location to another, establishing a new slave quarter affected the entire plantation.

Occasional seasonal surplus labor was not necessarily sufficient to undertake this type of longer-term investment and the seasonal nature of the labor surplus also constrained more time-intensive activities, including long-distance travel to satellite plantations. In contrast, the infrastructure improvements discussed above might be accomplished over a relatively short period as the initial investment of enslaved laborers augmented an existing group of skilled ones. There are many short-term activities that could easily absorb some of their uncommitted time, including the repair of fences and buildings, maintenance of roads, and the processing of food crops and other raw materials for use by the plantation's population. But assuming these demands remained relatively constant, and plantation owners reserved adequate time

for these activities within earlier agricultural schedules, there would remain a labor surplus.²⁰²

If the plantation owner could balance his priorities and plan ahead, everything was in reach. Those who succeeded in learning how to balance these priorities developed a highly valued skill that not only led to sustained and perhaps increased profits, but also the respect of peers and the material reflections of an elevated status. The enslaved Africans who accomplished many of these tasks became an increasingly important cog in the plantation machine as their value to their masters increased and their tasks became intrinsically connected with the plantation landscape.

A diligent plantation owner could potentially project profits based on the number of slaves she or he owned and the number of acres under cultivation every season, and carry that through subsequent years based on the reproductive potential of his workforce. These calculations, based on the hard work and difficult conditions often associated with introducing new agricultural processes and the development of infrastructure, would not include considerations of the enslaved African workforce. Rather, it would focus on their worth versus the cost of their loss. As attitudes increasingly turned towards classifying this part of the plantation population as something less than human, their value increased and the realm of possibilities for their labor grew. This not only drove demand for enslaved Africans, but also drove

²⁰² It is necessary to ask whether the idea of implementing a large-scale landscape design necessitated an increased investment in enslaved laborers, rather than the availability of surplus labor sparking the interest and making feasible this massive undertaking. Resolving that issue would require substantial documentation of the desires of the colony-wide elite, an accurate accounting of the number of enslaved Africans on a specific home plantation over the last half of the seventeenth century, or a tightly dated chronology of landscape design implementation. Sadly, there are no plantations which possess all three of these data sets, and only a few have even one for this period. This frustratingly limits the level of certainty regarding this issue, but does not prevent its discussion.

land speculation and settlement. While tobacco would dominate for years to come, the tendency to grow increasing amounts of corn and wheat for provisioning an expanding plantation population, coincided with an overall trend towards expanded investment in infrastructure. This would separate elite merchant-planters like Lewis Burwell II from their peers by demonstrating their knowledge and management of new agricultural operations, and symbolize their wealth and power through the ownership and control over both man and nature.

The chapter that follows will address how Lewis Burwell II developed a designed landscape out of these circumstances. I propose that he redefined his plantation to respond to the radical changes in his world at the end of the seventeenth century. The discussion includes a consideration of the influence of contemporary landscapes in England and Virginia and the influence of masons, brick makers, carpenters, and others in landscape design. Regardless of any personal experience connected with these landscapes, the desire to design and construct them in Virginia resulted in one of the most significant changes to the plantation in Virginia's history. More importantly, these factors set the foundation for the designed plantations of the eighteenth century and reified the institution of slavery through the physical manifestation of control over property and nature.

Chapter 4: The Manor House



East elevation of the Fairfield manor house, c. 1890.
Cook Collection, Valentine History Museum, Richmond, Virginia.

"...this Soart of Life is without expence, yet it is attended with a great deal of trouble. I must take care to keep all my people to their Duty, to set all the springs in motion and to make every one draw his equal Share to carry the Machine forward."²⁰³

In 1726, William Byrd II, imagined the ideal world that lay before him as he began the redesign of his Westover plantation and contemplated the costs of luxury in Virginia's Chesapeake. A status symbol and a producer of wealth, the plantation as an enterprise required a massive investment in time and labor. But through its careful manipulation, he could create a level of self-sufficiency with the surrounding auxiliary

²⁰³ Byrd to Orrery, July 5, 1726; no author, "Virginia Council Journals, 1726-1753" in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 32 (1924), 1: 27.

buildings housing coopers, blacksmiths, cobblers, and other craftspeople, both skilled slaves and hired-out white craftsmen. The presence of these activities on the plantation provided an elevated level of economic confidence and security few others in the colony would ever know, allowing indulgence in leisure activities and investment in other forms of business and entertainment. Its development was not without cost. From its redesign, through its continued and costly maintenance, a successful plantation required a particular set of skills, knowledge, experience, faith, reliance on others, and more than a little luck to orchestrate its complex network of interlocking and interdependent parts.

Byrd was not alone in his concerns. Lewis Burwell II, a significant influence on William Byrd II, shared in his vision. Byrd had previously sought out Burwell's advice, as a student would a mentor, particularly on matters concerning the management of plantations. On May 1, 1710, Byrd wrote in his diary of a recent visit, stating that he spent the day learning all he could "from Major Burwell who is a sensible man skilled in matters relating to tobacco."²⁰⁴ Byrd's machine analogy highlights his preference that "my people" act in a predictable and efficient manner. He worried about the unpredictability of human nature. But the "Springs" were equally important, whether they were the tobacco plants or the schedule that guided the everyday tasks. The idea of sharing equally in the labor, at least among those who labored most, highlights the desire of Byrd and his elite merchant-planter contemporaries to make consistent and controllable the landscape's human and natural elements. Their experiences rose out of a system of experimentation, the trial and error that developed during the concluding decades of the seventeenth century when

²⁰⁴ Wright and Tinling, *The Secret Diary of William Byrd*, 28.

the Chesapeake plantation system underwent dramatic changes. Byrd's writing emphasizes the increasing reliance of the merchant-planter elite on the plantation landscape and its most important function: profit producer. By the time of Byrd's "new" Westover, the plantation landscape operated as an essential factor in determining everyday life for the elite merchant-planters and many of the enslaved Africans in the Chesapeake. A part of their identity, the plantation became a symbol of ideal colonial life for many colonists and a struggle against enslavement for the many Africans who lived within it.

Chapters 4 and 5 document how Lewis Burwell II responded to the radical changes occurring in his world through the design and development of a formal plantation landscape at the end of the seventeenth century. At the figurative center of that plantation he built one of the most important structures in the Chesapeake. Its construction signaled the wholesale adoption of a new classical aesthetic that began to sweep over the top echelons of English society in the quarter century following the great fire of 1666 in London. According to architectural historian Carl Lounsbury, "although Inigo Jones showed the way with his court commissions, it was only after the Restoration that this Renaissance classicism spread beyond royal and aristocratic circles to the gentry and merchants in their private dwellings and public buildings through England."²⁰⁵ The manor house at Fairfield, as far as we can tell, is the first Virginia embodiment of this new aesthetic.

Dramatic events in the life of Lewis Burwell II presented opportunities and challenges that affected the physical world of his plantation. Two events in particular

²⁰⁵ Carl Lounsbury, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Department of Architectural and Archaeological Research, Personal Communication, 2013.

catapulted Lewis Burwell II to a position of leadership among this influential subset of society. First, the death of Burwell's uncle-in-law, Nathaniel Bacon, the Elder, in 1692 left him responsible for one of the colony's largest estates as it descended through Bacon's only relative in Virginia, his niece, Abigail Smith Burwell.²⁰⁶ Her husband, Lewis Burwell II, assumed the position of executor of Bacon's estate, more than doubling their family's fortune and establishing landed estates for their sons and valuable dowries for their daughters. The settlement of Bacon's accounts further strengthened established bonds and created new links between Burwell and the most prominent leaders of the colony, establishing longtime friendships and essential economic and political connections. This made possible the second event: the design and construction of a magnificent manor house and surrounding landscape that arguably redefined how the ruling merchant-planter class approached their plantations. These factors altered the lives of the enslaved Africans and others who lived and worked within this landscape, creating a permanent, visual connection between land and laborer for generations to come.

Influenced by contemporary English architectural design, construction techniques, and landscapes, imported through the brick and stone masons, carpenters, and other skilled craftsmen contracted by Burwell's contemporaries (and likely by him as well), and, to a similar degree, by the plantations of his contemporaries, Lewis Burwell II designed and developed a manor house and formal landscape that served as a model for his and future generations of elite merchant planters. The development of this plantation design resulted in a dramatic change to the property's environment and

²⁰⁶ Blair, *The Rise of the Burwells*, 20; no author, "Letters of William Fitzhugh," in *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 2 (1894), 1: 125-126.

coincided with the elite's increased investment in tobacco monoculture, an expanding enslaved African population, and fascination with masonry construction. The enslaved Africans he purchased and put to work for his own benefit also influenced the plantation design, from their involvement in its construction through their actions maintaining and living within it. Lewis Burwell II's actions demonstrated his commitment to re-inventing his parent's plantation. With these modifications - tearing down buildings, moving slave quarters, and expanding the formal garden - he manipulated the built and natural environment, personalized his home, and disconnected it from his father's, step-fathers', and mother's visions of the plantation, creating one wholly original and pioneering at the end of the seventeenth century.

High mortality rates in seventeenth-century Virginia resulted in husbands, wives, and children adapting to a changing definition of family. After his father's passing, Lewis Burwell II benefitted from the guidance of no less than three father figures who, along with his mother, guided his development as a young man, provided for his education, and introduced him into elite society. Chapter Two discussed the first three, including Lewis Burwell I, William Bernard and Philip Ludwell I. Abigail Burwell's uncle, Nathaniel Bacon, the Elder, was the fourth. At Abingdon Church on October 14th, 1680, Lewis and Abigail baptized their first son, Nathaniel, in honor of this man.²⁰⁷ Alongside his sisters, Joanna and Elizabeth, Nathaniel represented both the past and the future. Rather than perpetuating the family's patriarchal name, Lewis and Abigail chose to name their first son for someone they both loved and

²⁰⁷ Robins, *The Register of Abingdon Parish*.

respected.²⁰⁸ Bacon lived a relatively short distance from the young couple, across the York River in York County along King's Creek on a plantation of the same name. Abigail's closest family member, he was never far away.

Born in 1620, Nathaniel Bacon arrived in Virginia in 1650. He quickly ascended to the uppermost political positions in the colony and remained there until his death. He held the position of Burgess for York County in 1658 and 1659, and sat on the Governor's Council over a lengthy period, serving as Auditor-General from 1675-1687 and President/Acting Governor in 1689. Bacon's sister, Martha, married Anthony Smith in England, and after their deaths around 1665, brought their daughters, Ann and Abigail, to Virginia. Ann married a prominent Isle of Wight planter while Abigail remained with her adoptive parents until she married Lewis Burwell II. Bacon and his wife represented Abigail's closest family members and surrogate parents. She likely met the upwardly mobile Lewis Burwell II through her uncle's political connections, his relationships with most members of the gentry and their families, and the relatively close proximity of his plantation at King's Creek to Burwell's Fairfield.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁸ Abigail and Lewis named their second son Lewis, who died young; Robins, *The Register of Abingdon Parish*; Howe, "Gloucester Beginnings with the Burwells," 44; Lyon G. Tyler, "Notes by the Editor," in *The William & Mary Quarterly* 2 (1894), 4: 230-236. Lewis named his fifth son Lewis, an offspring with his second wife, Martha Lear Cole, born in 1698 or 1699; Meade, "The Children of Major Lewis Burwell II," 24. This Lewis went on to build Kingsmill Plantation on the James River.

²⁰⁹ Blair, *The Rise of the Burwells*, 20. Nathaniel Bacon was president and acting governor of the colony during the absences of Governor Francis Howard, Baron Howard of Effingham, between June and September 1684 and July and September 1687, and after Effingham's departure from the colony in March 1689 until Lieutenant Governor Francis Nicholson's arrival in June 1690. The genealogy of the Smith family is difficult to reconstruct and historians speculate about her uncle's involvement based on the data that survives and a complete absence of information concerning her parents living in the colony. See Della Gray Barthelmas, *The Signers of the Declaration of Independence: A Biographical and Genealogical Reference* (Jefferson, N.C., 2003): 200; no author, "Notes and Queries," in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 29 (1921), 1: i-xvi, 41.

Bacon may have had his greatest influence on them as a father figure. Coming from an established family in England, having traveled as a youth to France in 1647, and likely possessing a formal education, Bacon's cosmopolitan experience stood in stark contrast to Abigail and Lewis's upbringings. Abigail served as a surrogate daughter, of sorts, as neither of Bacon's marriages, the first to twice-widowed Ann Bassett Smith Jones and, soon after her death in March 1655, to Elizabeth Kingsmill Tayloe, produced any children. His political and economic ambitions, accelerated by his wives' and his own considerable fortunes, positioned his family as one of the wealthiest and most influential in the colony.²¹⁰

A role model for both Abigail and Lewis, Nathaniel Bacon, the Elder's politics existed in the middle ground between the various international factions playing for power during the interregnum. Bacon remained clearly loyalist, despite his familial connections, when his cousin led a rebellion against Governor Sir William Berkeley and his cohort in 1676. Bacon politically wagered on Nathaniel Bacon's (the younger) desire for money and power, first offering him significant land in trade for his promise that "hee would lay downe his Armes, and become a good subject to his Majestie, that that colony might not be disturbed or destroyed, nor his owne Family stained with soe foule a Blott."²¹¹ But the younger man did not accept his uncle's offer. Rather, his supporters sacked the elder's plantation on King's Creek, causing damage estimated at £1,000. Ultimately, Nathaniel Bacon the Elder survived the conflict and flourished as

²¹⁰ Bacon's political appointments and their fees, his role as auditor of the royal revenue in the colony, assuring that money due to the Crown was collected and sent to London, earned a commission yielding the substantial sum of about £250 a year.

²¹¹ Peter V. Bergstrom, "Bacon, Nathaniel (bap. 1620–1692)" in *Dictionary of Virginia Biography*, Volume 1, edited by John T. Kneebone, J. Jefferson Looney, Brent Tarter, and Sandra Gloria Treadway (Richmond, 1998): 270–271.

the years progressed while playing the role of elder statesman and leader of the colony, his younger relative passing away violently from the "bloody flux." Lewis Burwell II followed in his uncle-in-law's footsteps. By the end of his own life Burwell achieved comparable rank and status to the elder Bacon, dispensing wisdom and choosing his battles carefully, and did so from the comfort of Bacon's plantation.

Lewis Burwell II maintained a connection with both Nathaniel Bacon the Elder and King's Creek plantation for the remainder of his life. When Bacon died on March 16, 1692, his estate descended to Abigail, and from her to Lewis, who served as the estate's executor. While the loss of the statesman affected the lives of family, friends, and the leadership of the colony, the death had no greater impact than on his niece and her husband. Through the merger of these two estates, Lewis Burwell II more than doubled his family's already considerable wealth.²¹² The inheritance included:

The plantation [1,200 acres called King's Creek] whereon I now live and all other lands in Hampton and Burton pish In Yorke County by me purchased...[including a lot in Yorktown],... all my lands in the Isle of Wight and Nanzemond Countys [covering 1,775 acres],...[and] all my lands in New Kent County [including 300 acres] to be managed and disposed of to the best advantage of the said Lewis Burwell's four daughters.²¹³

Bacon also planned for the future of his niece's children. He provided each child with 50 pound sterling, part of a larger group of relations receiving a total of £575 in cash legacies and several enslaved Africans. Along with three acres on Jamestown island, his personal estate equaled almost £1,200.

His uncle-in-law's residence, in particular, influenced Burwell's perception of how a building and its landscape might reflect a man of significant stature and mark

²¹² Blair, *The Rise of the Burwells*, 20; no author, "Letters of William Fitzhugh," in *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 2 (1894), 1: 125-126.

²¹³ Probated in York County Court 24 March 1691/2"; YCDOW IX (1691-1694): 116.

his place within the colony's social and political elite. While no evidence of the plantation buildings exists above ground, the Bacon-Burwell family tombstones remain within a brick-walled plot adjacent the eighteenth hole of the United States Navy's Cheatham Annex golf course. The inventory of Bacon's estate survives, though, and lists a house of at least eight rooms with at least four chambers on the uppermost floor. The number of different rooms, each with a different function, along with the amount of space they encompassed, exhibits a level of wealth and status possessed by few others. The vast majority of property owners owned houses where the sole chamber remained on the first floor, serving dual purposes as sleeping area and entertainment space. In addition, Bacon's inventory documents at least three additional buildings near his manor house and a plantation of 1,200 acres with over twenty enslaved Africans living thereon. The value of Bacon's estate ranks him among the wealthiest in the colony. Historian John Coombs, drawing the comparison between slave ownership and elite status during this period, used the example of councilor Nathaniel Bacon to highlight the increasing gap between the rich and the extremely rich. Bacon so outpaced his neighboring lesser gentry that by the end of the century none possessed more than seven enslaved Africans; he owned at least forty.²¹⁴

Already ascending the colony's political ladder, Lewis Burwell II's sudden acquisition of Bacon's estate, including substantial amounts of land, money, property (including enslaved Africans), and influence in Gloucester County and beyond catapulted his position among the more prominent members of an expanding merchant-planter elite. Lewis and Abigail children became the primary long-term beneficiaries of their great uncle's estate, assured of the economic and social position

²¹⁴ YCDOW X (1694-1697): 274-77; Coombs, *Building "The Machine,"* 92, 199.

of their father's generation simply by this single substantial inheritance. The Burwell family grew steadily in the years that preceded Bacon's death, adding Lucy (1683), Martha (1685), Bacon (1687), Jane (1688), and James (1690).²¹⁵ While this inheritance may have alleviated concerns over the long-term welfare of his children, Lewis Burwell II still had the challenge of managing this tremendous estate, a task that absorbed substantial time and effort.

Lewis Burwell II's responsibilities as executor of Bacon's estate involved consistent and numerous requests by the Governor's Council, including an audit, that took more than seven years to complete.²¹⁶ At a meeting of the Governor's Council at King's Creek, the councilors stated that Bacon "still possessed a large sum received in his position as Auditor-General" and they requested the attendance of Lewis Burwell II at a future council meeting along with "all of Bacon's accounts, papers, vouchers and the like, for purpose of examination." Thirteen months later, after reviewing the documents, the Council asked Burwell to "appeare at the Audite the 21th day of June next and to pay the balance of two Shillings per Head...also give bond and Security to pay all such Sums...as shall appear due their Mas for Quit Rents...and the part of the Negroes &c Seized in the yeare 1687."²¹⁷ Later that summer on July 5th the Council declared that 258/15s/6d be paid by Burwell to "Rt. Honoble Francis Nicholson Esqre

²¹⁵ Robins, *The Register of Abingdon Parish*, Lucy - November 21 (born) December 5 (bapt); Martha - November 16 (bapt); Bacon - February 22 (born) March 10 (bapt); Jane - November 16 (bapt); and James - February 4 (born) March 2 (bapt).

²¹⁶ 19 March 1692, H.R. McIlwaine, ed., *Executive Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia*, Volume I, (11 June 1680 - 22 June 1699) (Richmond, 1925): 218; 29 April 1692 request to appear for an audit on 21 June 1692 to pay the balance of "two shillings per hhead account that shall appear due in his hands, as also give bond and Security to pay all such Sums of Money as shall appeare due to their Mas for Quit Rents and the part of the Negroes &c seized in the year 1687"; H.R. McIlwaine, ed., *Executive Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia*, Volume I, (11 June 1680 - 22 June 1699) (Richmond, 1925): 239.

²¹⁷ McIlwaine, *Executive Journals*, Volume I, 240. See also Blair, *The Rise of the Burwells*, 21-22.

their Mas Leiut Govr of this Colony who is pleased to accept thereof in part of his Salary.”²¹⁸ The issue persisted till 22 June 1699 when the Council relieved Burwell of any further responsibilities regarding Nathaniel Bacon’s will and accounts, stating such in an instrument drawn up according to the praer of Burwell’s petition.²¹⁹

Burwell's increasing obligations throughout every spectrum of colonial society - social, political, agricultural, and economic - required a degree of restraint, having to carefully select what he became involved in, limiting the depth of his investments and involvement in politics and society. While a dearth of documentation related to his personal actions and Gloucester-specific activities limits a more complete understanding of his daily life, what little written evidence remains suggests he focused his time, effort, and money on his plantation, his political life representing a lesser priority. Burwell likely participated in parish or county office, but did not serve as Burgess for Gloucester County and did not ascend to the Governor's Council until 1698. He continued to incrementally patent land and pursue business endeavors, serving as executor to numerous estates in York County and he was referenced frequently in court cases as creditor, witness, grantee and grantor. But his name is rarely seen in the surviving documents of the Council or associated with higher political activities in the 1680s and early 1690s. If his later life indicates any particular preference, he chose a less active role in politics whether because of a disdain for it or because his body could not keep up with the demands.²²⁰

²¹⁸ McIlwaine, *Executive Journals*, Volume I, 261.

²¹⁹ *ibid.*, 464-465.

²²⁰ An alternative interpretation would suggest a behind-the-scenes role for Burwell, his name remaining absent from surviving records, but his actions, seen through the work of his friends and associates. This is a tantalizing possibility, but would be very difficult to prove conclusively.

The meeting of 20 October 1698 marked Burwell's first involvement as a member of the Council. He voted to approve moving the colony's records remaining after the fire "of today" at Jamestown to "Mrs. Sherwoods brickhouse in James City." The meeting included "Such of the Noted Gentlemen of the Countrey as were present in Town." At the same meeting, the Council made Lewis Burwell II part of a seven member committee to make "Strict inquiry into the beginning & Cause of the said fire & take that Order Shall be necessary therein." Blair writes that Burwell did not officially take his seat on the Council until August 21, 1699 "as Colonel Lee had expressed a desire to be relieved of his position on the Council, he should be "discharged accordingly, and that Mr. Lewis Burwell may be instituted as a Member...in his stead."²²¹

If his level of involvement in local politics and business in Gloucester County matched his record in York County, Burwell appears to have been busy enough to justify any avoidance of higher appointment.²²² But his requests to be excused from political obligations seem to indicate a more painful reason: sickness. Burwell first expressed an interest in resigning from the council on August 20, 1701 in a letter to Sir Jeffrey Jeffreys. His reasons included "his age and Infirmary" (May 14, 1702) and being "disabled in my limbs" (July 23, 1703). He eventually gained his removal from the board during the last weeks of 1702 or the early weeks of 1703, the Queen's letter

²²¹ McIlwaine, *Executive Journals*, Volume I, 392; Blair, *The Rise of the Burwells*, 26, n. 36; no author, "Historical and Genealogical Notes and Queries," in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 9 (1902), 3:106-107; George Harrison Burwell and Robert Burwell, *Record of the Burwell Family* (Richmond, 1908).

²²² See Chapter 2, Gloucester County court records lost to fires in 1820 and 1865.

of discharge including the appointment of three additional men as the Governor was finding it difficult to reach a quorum at the meetings.²²³

Responsible for multiple, massive estates, surrounded by an already large and expanding family, and sought after by his fellow elite merchant planters to join them at the political fulcrum of colonial society, Lewis Burwell II possessed a profitable and presumably fulfilling life in Virginia which turned from one of rapid ascendancy in the early 1690s to a position powerful enough to turn down appointments at the colony's highest level (if only for his health concerns). Returning to that earlier period, it is clear to see his political trajectory and how planning for and constructing the manor house and plantation landscape of his future fit within this scheme. Imagine the pressures of an expanding family, the ascendancy among the colony's elite families, and the sudden influx of significant wealth. At the same time, consider the aspirations of a young member of the gentry, following in the footsteps of three very prominent fathers and encouraged by an even more prominent uncle-in-law. Lewis Burwell II had a growing family, a successful tobacco operation, and a role in helping decide the future of the colony. Why not build a house that suited his dreams? Here was an opportunity to push the boundaries of what others deemed possible, to create a new world and a comfortable life, and to ensure the happiness and successful futures for his family. Rather than his prior successes determining whether he designed and built his plantation anew, his investments in the plantation's formal architecture and

²²³ Letters from the Governor of Virginia to the Committee for Trade and Plantations..., C.O. 5/1312, 1700-1702; William P. Palmer, Sherwin McRae, Raleigh E. Colston, and Henry W. Flournoy, eds., *Calendar of Virginia State Papers and Other Manuscripts...Preserved...at Richmond, 1652-1869*, Volume I (Richmond, 1875-93): 76; Correspondence Received by the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations from the Governor of Virginia..., C.O. 5/1314, 1704-1705, Cecil Headlam, *Calendar of State Papers, America and West Indies*, Volume 22: 1704-1705 (London 1916): 110; "Council Papers, 1698-1701 (Continued)," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 23 (1915), 4: 393; Des Cognets, Jr., *English Duplicates of Lost Virginia Records*, 244.

presentation garnered him significant social capital to rival any of his other accomplishments.

Life was imperfect, though. As with his contemporaries, Burwell experienced the same twists of fate which often brought sadness and misfortune to every family in Virginia. On November 12th, 1692, before his peers approached him concerning a seat on the Council of State, his beloved wife passed away. Abigail Burwell "who Not Being more Honorable in her Birth Than vertuous in her Life Departed this world" at 36 years of age having given birth to four sons and six daughters.²²⁴ Her epitaph is one of the only documents that attest to her personality, or her existence, independent of her husband. Frequently pregnant and, as with her contemporaries, involved in the direct care and management of her family and her household, her responsibilities exceeded the hours in the day. Her death undoubtedly devastated her family. It also affected the design and development of the manor house and surrounding landscape.

Alongside Lewis Burwell II for over a decade, she knew him, and he her, better than any other person. Presuming that she desired greater opportunity and social mobility, much like her contemporaries, it is possible to see her benefitting from the social capital created through the manor house's function as an entertainment space. While impressing visitors and peers, it also served as a monument to her and her family's knowledge of societal trends and fashionable living. The question of what role she played in its design may never be answered sufficiently for some, but it would be difficult to imagine her remaining silent, without a role assisting her husband and likely influencing him openly. While this interpretation may appear to be based on

²²⁴ Howe, "Gloucester Beginnings with the Burwells," 44; Robins, "The Story of the Removal of the Burwell Tombs."

twenty-first-century impressions of gender roles mapped onto past actors, a more reasonable assumption might be that through Abigail's actions as a wife, mother, and leader of the household, her example as a female head of household represented the contemporary ideal for elite merchant planter families. Her presence, as a role model for any wife, would be included in Lewis Burwell II's vision for his manor house.

The year following Abigail's death, Lewis Burwell II appeared more frequently in surviving legal and business proceedings, perhaps signifying greater attention to financial matters and the condition of his estate, or simply a desire for the distractions of public life that would provide him with some escape from the sorrow of losing a loved one. Luckily, his two oldest children, Joanna (at least 18) and Elizabeth (at least 17), were old enough and would have possessed the knowledge to take on their mother's role, maintaining the household at an integral moment in the family's history. A 41-year-old widower, Lewis Burwell II served as a deponent regarding accounts between Thomas Starke of London, merchant, and William Seager, master of the *Concord*. He purchased acreage in York County along with "three Negroe slaves...as also 12 good young Cowes with their increase...as also the land, houseing, orchrds, gardings, [etc.]" from William Coman.²²⁵ Most significant about the latter transaction is the witness to the deal, William Bassett. No less than two weeks later the "Hon. William Bassett of New Kent County" would be the first to marry a Burwell daughter.

Joanna married this up-and-coming member of an established family, already a member of the House of Burgesses and a future member of the Council of State (1707

²²⁵ Peter Wilson Coldham, *The Complete Book of Emigrants, 1661-1699* (Baltimore, 1987-1993): 640; YCDOW IX (1691-1694): 291.

and 1711).²²⁶ Joanna moved to his up-river plantation, Eltham, at the confluence of the Pamunkey and York Rivers, near West Point in New Kent County. Separated by a relatively short distance by boat, Bassett maintained a long-term business partnership and friendship with his father-in-law and his new brothers-in-law throughout their lives, purchasing land and providing mutual support through their political endeavors.²²⁷ While this would be the first of many Burwell marriages with financial and political benefits, Lewis Burwell II encouraged his children to look for love first, regardless of the implications. In a letter to his stepfather, Philip Ludwell I, written July 23, 1703, Lewis Burwell II explained that "I am daily alarmed with threatening messages of ruine [from Governor Nicholson], for what I know not, unless it be because I will not force my daughter to marry utterly against her will, which is a thing no Christian body can do."²²⁸

Lewis Burwell II witnessed the departure of his household's eldest female members in short succession. Joanna's marriage, the culmination of a courtship likely involving more than a few suitors, developed over time; it involved planning, circumstance, and a little luck, all under the larger umbrella of acceptable behavior in elite colonial society. It contrasted significantly with her mother's passing which defied these intentions, forcing a reconciliation between ideals and actions, dreams and the reality of the here and now. Mortality was ever-present in colonial society, but

²²⁶ Stella Pickett Hardy, *Colonial Families of the Southern States of America* (New York, 1911): 43; Sally's Family Place, *Sally's Blog*. [<http://www.sallysfamilyplace.com/Rayner/armistead5.htm>, accessed 10 October 2013].

²²⁷ On 23 November 1694 Lewis Burwell II sold "Matchcoake," New Kent County, Va. to William Bassett. Another future son-in-law, Benjamin Harrison, witnessed the deal; Mss2 B2948 b 4-8; Bassett Family Papers, 1650-1811. Section 2, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, VA.

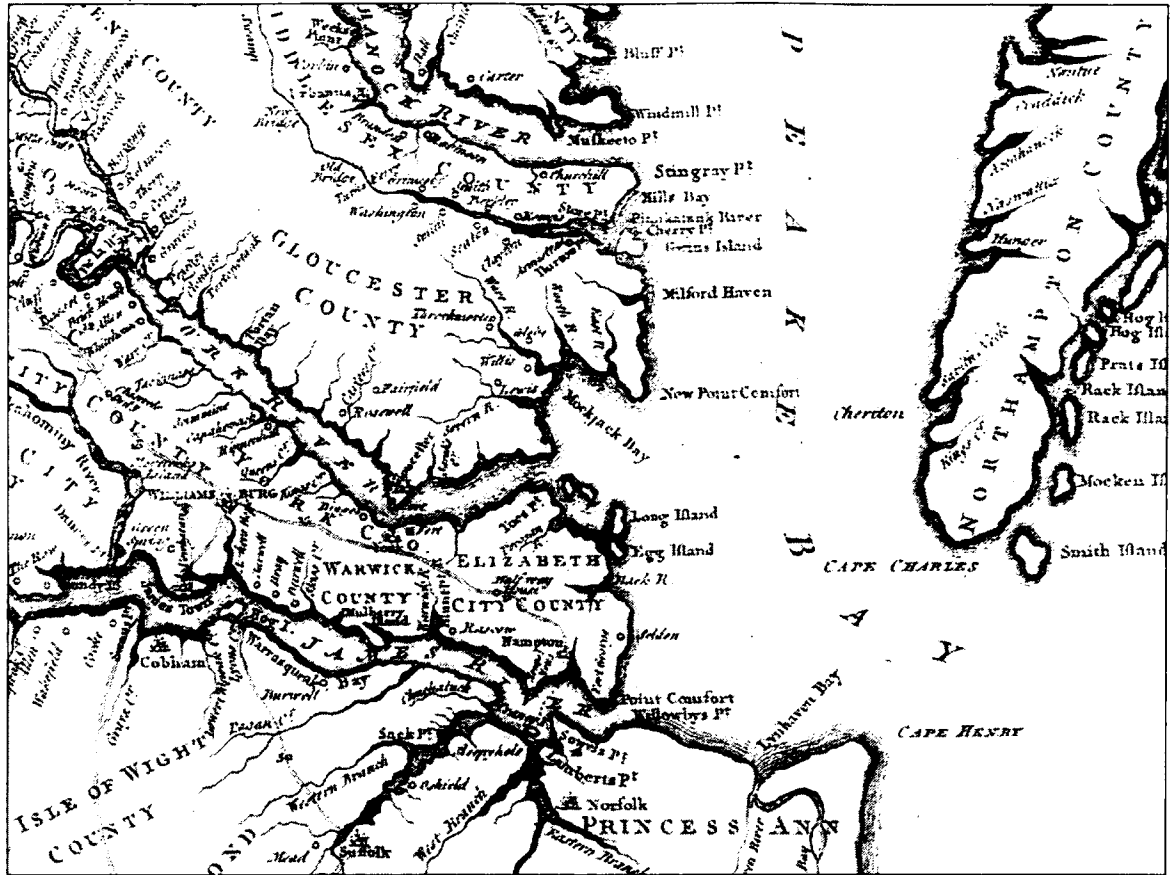
²²⁸ Correspondence Received by the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations from the Governor of Virginia..., C.O. 5/1314, 1704-1705; Cecil Headlam, *Calendar of State Papers, America and West Indies*, Volume 22: 1704-1705 (London 1916): 110.

death remained largely unexpected. How these departures affected Lewis Burwell II's plans cannot be known for certain. Beyond the loss of a loved one, or the absence of a helping hand and family member, the emotional void was understandably deep. In the case of Joanna, a daughter's love, voice, and mere presence would be missed, but the knowledge that she prospered with a family of her own may have comforted her father. In the case of Abigail, the loss hurt far more, particularly her absence during social occasions, her administration of the household, and, most important, her role as a partner, confidant, and mother.²²⁹

Lewis Burwell II immortalized his love for Abigail in the house they envisioned together. Upon one of the largest and most sophisticated buildings in the colony, Lewis Burwell II acknowledged his first wife in a location of honor, high atop the distinctive triple diagonally-set chimney stacks on the east gable. Here he placed a cartouche, consisting of a collection of individually molded bricks with numbers and letters, specifically L, A, B, standing for Lewis and Abigail Burwell, and the year 1694. From this date forward the building would be known as a product of these two people, a symbol of their union and their family set in the region's most permanent and powerful material. Visitors would continue to note this prominent marker upon their visits to the plantation until the house's destruction by fire in 1897.²³⁰

²²⁹ Abigail Burwell, as with so many women of the period, did not write down her thoughts or those writings do not survive. Interpreting her at Fairfield, her actions, and her aspirations, requires an acceptance that, while it is vital to include her within the plantation narrative, much of her life is derived from what is understood to be typical of her contemporaries. See Kathleen M. Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia* (Chapel Hill, 1996). See also, Linda L. Sturtz, *Within Her Power: Propertied Women in Colonial Virginia* (New York, 2002); Arthur W. Calhoun, *The American Family in the Colonial Period* (Mineola, N.Y., 2004); Carol Berkin, *First Generations: Women in Colonial America* (New York, 1996).

²³⁰ Barbara Burlison Mooney, *Prodigy Houses of Virginia: Architecture and the Native Elite* (Charlottesville: 2008): 89-92. Bishop Meade published the first reference to the cartouche in 1856 when he visited Fairfield and soon after wrote "My next visit was to the old seat of the Burwells... The



"A Map of the Most Inhabited Part of Virginia Containing the Whole Province of Maryland with Part of Pensilvania, New Jersey, and North Carolina Drawn by Joshua Fry and Peter Jefferson, 1751."
Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

Lewis Burwell II constructed his manor house on relatively flat yet fertile land a mile-and-a-half from the York River, about thirty feet above Carter Creek. Nearly

house, as appears by figures on one of the walls, was built either in 1684 or 1694. Bishop Meade, *Old Churches, Ministers, and Families of Virginia* (Philadelphia, 1906): 352; paraphrased in R. A. Brock, *Commonplace Book*, (Richmond, n.d.), 66. J.L.C. Griffin recorded it in his diary in 1875 writing "The Carter's Creek mansion in [...G]loster Va., is one of oldest [...re]lics in that ancient county: [...on] the chimney of the large Hall [...] East Portion of this house are [...F]igures, 1694!" Stuart E. Brown, *Burwell: Kith and Kin of the Immigrant, Lewis Burwell (1621-1653): and Burwell Virginia Tidewater Plantation Mansions* (Berryville, 1994). Earl Gregg Swem, editor of the *William and Mary Quarterly*, adds a third reference, writing "In 1894 [I] visited the old brick house at the Burwell place, and saw high up on one of the chimneys the inscription 'L.A.B., 1694'." Earl Gregg Swem, ed., "Editor's Notes," *The William & Mary Quarterly*, 1st Series, 20 (1909): 168. See Everard Kidder Meade, "The Children of Major Lewis Burwell II of Gloucester County in the Ancient Colony of Virginia," in *Proceedings of the Clarke County Historical Association*, 4 (1944): 352; includes J.L.C. Griffin Diary, 1875.

forty-two feet tall at the tops of its chimneys, the building matched the height of the surrounding tree tops and commanded a clear view of the plantation's primary water thoroughfare. Referenced somewhat generically as "Lewis Burwell's plantation on Carter Creek" during much of its history, the "Fairfield" name was colonial in origin, but more frequently referenced after publication of the Frye and Jefferson map in 1751.²³¹ The former designation reflected the inherent connection between the agricultural enterprise, the house, and the waterway that connected the plantation to the rest of the world. The latter title evokes a different connection, focusing on the link between the human occupants and their impression of the quality of the surrounding environment.²³²

Burwell's plans for the building's layout, orientation, and external appearance reveal an attention to every detail, a preference for carefully calculated elements within a larger landscape that would ultimately transcend his own life - his intention from the first brick fired. Burwell either started or completed the first phase of his imposing brick manor home in 1694.²³³ An elaborate, overt expression of its owner's ideals and social values, the building's design reflected the accumulated knowledge of a man born and raised at this plantation, influenced by Abigail, his wife of twenty-one years who shared many days and nights with him here. They knew how the winds cut

²³¹ Lewis Burwell "The President" wrote to the Council of State on August 21, 1751 "I herewith transmit to you a Map of this Colony together with the best Account & Vouchers I can obtain to support the same" (C.O. 5:1327/355/6; Gooch Papers, III, 1066 - cited in Delf Norona, "Joshua Fry's Report on the Back Settlements of Virginia (May 8, 1751)," in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 56 (1948), 1: 27. Fry and Jefferson drafted the map while Burwell served as acting governor, according to instructions from the Board of Trade and Plantations. See Richard W. Stephenson and Marianne M. McKee, *Virginia in Maps: Four Centuries of Settlement, Growth, and Development* (Richmond, 2000): 83; 87.

²³² It is tempting to connect the origins of this name with Lewis Burwell II and his redesign of the plantation at the end of the late seventeenth century. The plantation retains the name Fairfield throughout the ownership period of the Thruston family, including the will of John Thruston "of Fairfield"; Robert Reade Thruston Papers, Filson Historical Society, Louisville, Kentucky, p.263.

²³³ Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia*, 34.

across the fields, how the sunlight broke through the trees, and how the soil felt in their hands and beneath their feet.

The manor house, as one very important but relatively small element of the plantation, served as an acknowledgement of the specific conditions of its surroundings, and a testament to the Burwells' knowledge of elite merchant-planter houses, the colony's public buildings, and the plantation landscapes developing nearby. He likely owned a library, perhaps as substantial as his friend William Byrd II's, exposing him to ideas in contemporary and ancient philosophy, law, religion, and politics with the occasional sketch of a European townscape or countryside.²³⁴ His direct exposure to and experience with planning other major construction projects is exemplified by his involvement in contracting and managing a nearly contemporary project which likely overlapped with the work at Fairfield's manor house, specifically construction of The College of William and Mary's main academic building beginning in 1695. Architectural historian Barbara Burlison Mooney refers to this knowledge of design and construction as "architectural literacy," a concept she employs on her study of mid-to-late eighteenth-century elite Virginians.²³⁵

Any documents regarding the construction of the manor house were lost long ago. There are no known ledger books, no account receipts, and no diary entries that explain the connections between the sixty-foot-long, symmetrical, five-bay north façade and a desire for purple sandstone stairs to compliment the red painted brick exterior. But the building ruin, along with the archaeological evidence connecting it to

²³⁴ Lewis Burwell II's son, James, once possessed a significant library at his house on Kings Creek, which he managed for his father c. 1708 and took over as his own plantation after his father's passing in 1710; see no author, "James Burwell's Library," in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* XVII (1909): 147-150.

²³⁵ Mooney, *Prodigy Houses of Virginia*, 158.

Lewis and Abigail Burwell, their family, and the many skilled craftsmen and many more enslaved Africans who helped build it, provides insight into the house's construction and how its design pushed the proverbial boundaries of Virginia architecture at the end of its first century.

Masonry built houses numbered among the extreme minority compared to the post-in-ground or frame buildings of seventeenth-century Virginia. There are no reliable contemporary estimates for the number of houses in the colony at the time of Fairfield's construction, but historic accounts in 1666 state that a hurricane's high winds, rain, and flooding destroyed over 10,000 buildings. Undoubtedly an estimate, and quite possibly an exaggeration, such a large number compares favorably with the population of that period. While there are few accounts of brick buildings of this period, the combined historical and archaeological evidence suggests that there were certainly less than fifty full brick (foundation and walls) buildings by that time and less than 100 by the decade Lewis Burwell II built his manor house. Until recently, historians and architectural historians used a limited selection of eight to ten well documented examples to represent the "typical" form, function, and symbolic meaning of these relatively unique buildings. The synthesis of this data, the refinement of building dates through dendrochronology, and the inclusion of numerous archaeologically discovered examples has left scholars with a much larger and more accurate database of over thirty structures to compare.²³⁶

Building a brick house was exponentially more complex, time consuming, and expensive than building a frame house. An established tradition of frame architecture

²³⁶ David A. Brown, "Domestic Masonry Architecture in 17th-Century Virginia" in *Northeast Historical Archaeology* 27 (1998): 85-120.

developed in Virginia starting in the early seventeenth century and developed to such a degree that it warranted its own designation that set it apart from contemporary examples: the Virginia House. While English colonists expected to eventually build a house in the colony similar to those they knew well from before they emigrated, over the course of the seventeenth century they understood the realities of a lifestyle focused on raising tobacco and the expediency of adapting their house to suit a different environment and culture than that of their earlier years. Over the course of the century houses contained fewer rooms, chimneys on the gables (rather than at the center of the house), and entry directly into the hall, rather than a passage. Carson states that "As a practical matter, planters were shedding unwanted baggage from home and jerry-rigging the rest into farmhouses that were better suited to the colonies."²³⁷

Building in brick required the acquisition of considerable amounts of raw materials, including clay for brick making, more timber for firing the brick clamps, and a host of imported architectural details that best suit a full brick building, such as stylish sash windows. It required typically importing on contract various skilled laborers, including brick layers, carpenters, and potentially stone masons, assuming one of the few already in Virginia was not available. Contemplating the cost, length of time, and impact on the plantation likely deterred many elite Virginians from pursuing this type of construction. Lewis Burwell II, though, understood the costs and chose to undertake a project more complex than almost any other yet seen in the colony. His success in raising tobacco, developing plantation infrastructure, and

²³⁷ Carson, "Plantation Housing," 98, quote 99; see also Fraser D. Neiman, "Temporal Patterning in House Plans for the 17th-Century Chesapeake," in *The Archaeology of 17th-Century Virginia*, edited by Theodore R. Reinhart and Dennis J. Pogue (Richmond, 1993), 251-83.

managing increasing numbers of enslaved Africans on multiple properties gave him enough confidence to consider taking the risk in this endeavor. Failure to successfully complete a project like this would not only result in near bankruptcy or at least significant debt, but also embarrassment among peers. Understanding the challenges of building a brick manor house, as one element of Lewis Burwell II's larger plantation landscape design, is necessary before comprehend its social, political, and economical values and costs.

Lewis Burwell II's greatest asset in the construction of the Fairfield manor house was his lifetime of experiences at the plantation. While the ideas for the plantation design came from across the colony, from across the Atlantic, and from the past, its raw materials were inherently local, immediate and forward looking. The most unique and visibly dominant elements of the new manor house were the reddish-brown bricks that constituted its foundation, its walls, and its skyward-reaching chimney stacks. Made of local clay extracted from the surrounding acreage, Burwell would employ, at minimum, approximately 400,000 bricks in the building's construction. The Fairfield manor house walls were two feet thick, extended over four feet into the ground and over twenty feet above the level, grassy surrounds of the massive house.

For visitors from a nearby tenant farm, or for an enslaved African on a nearby, smaller plantation, a brick house was a rarity, perhaps the only one for miles. It might remind the recent immigrant of buildings in England, or enslaved Africans of buildings in or near the Caribbean and African port towns they witnessed during their forced migration to Virginia. It communicated many things to the viewer. It

represented a tremendous investment in labor, money, and, most significantly, time, a resource others might consider better spent on growing tobacco and more directly profitable endeavors. Brick manufacturing required patience, taking at least a year, from start to finish, for a properly prepared pile. Brick making most often began in the fall, digging the clay for firing over the next year. The extracted clay weathered over the winter months, its exposure to weather promoting the process of leaching out destructive salts, increasing the clay's plasticity. Tempered and mixed in the months following Christmas, workers removed pebbles, added sand as a tempering agent and perhaps added ash to aid in the firing. Once they achieved the proper consistency, a worker moved the clay to a shed where one-by-one they placed it into brick molds producing an unfired "green" brick. Houghton states that "a man without help will make a thousand [bricks] in a day" and would coincide with the bricks air drying in a shed for three more weeks. Stacked and fired in kilns or clamps, the "burning" lasted about a week and required constant attention. Metz writes that "the intensity and distribution of the flame was controlled by adding fuel and adjusting the draft through the shinlogs at the eyes of the channels." Bricks cooled for several days. Workers disassembled the structure and evaluated each brick, sorting them by color. Those glazed blackish or bluish, a result of potash vaporized from hardwood fuel, were near the most intense heat and over-fired, sometimes making them unsuitable for construction, compromising the brick's strength. Others, light red or pink in color, were under-fired, reducing their durability and resistance to weather, particularly moisture.²³⁸

²³⁸ Alan Cox, *Brickmaking: A History and Gazetteer* (Bedfordshire, England, 1979): 4; John D. Metz, "Cities of Brick": The Myth and Reality of Brick in 17th Century Virginia. Manuscript on file, The Fairfield

The process required experienced, skilled craftsmen to make the bricks, and still others to lay them and build a house that would last for generations. John Houghton wrote a manual on all aspects of husbandry, including brick making, recommending in 1668 that a team of brick makers should include four men and two boys throughout the production cycle. The selection of the right brick maker was crucial. The chance that a firing of a few thousand bricks might fail, or that the brick mason might run away or die, or that a period of particularly wet weather might delay the whole process, highlights the many opportunities for delay and failure and the tremendous risk involved. Most of these conditions existed beyond Lewis Burwell II's control, but he could focus his efforts on choosing a good brick maker, likely relying on the recommendations of friends in England or Virginia, perhaps using a craftsman already in the colony who recently completed work on another property.²³⁹

The number of usable bricks varied significantly from each firing. A skilled brick maker could reduce waste through close supervision of the kiln/clamp and its temperature but these men were rare in the Chesapeake. As with many skilled laborers, they often preferred working in more profitable endeavors such as growing tobacco or they chose to remain in England where a greater demand for their talents led to more consistent employment. This changed by the end of the seventeenth century, a trend visible in the increase in the number of brick buildings and brick

Foundation. White Marsh, Virginia; John Houghton, *A Collection of Letters for the Improvement of Husbandry and Trade* (London, 1683): quote 188.

²³⁹ Edward Dobson, "A Rudimentary Treatise on the Manufacture of Brick and Tiles." Original Date 1850. Reprinted in *Journal of Ceramic History*, No.5, edited by Francis Celoria. (Stafford, England, 1971), I: 38; Cox, *Brickmaking: A History and Gazetteer*, 11; Richard Goldthwaite, *The Building of Renaissance Florence: An Economic and Social History* (Baltimore, 1980): 186-187. Clamps were generally built on a construction site to provide brick for a single project. The major drawback of this kiln type was the inability to control the firing process. Unlike the more permanent structures, the heat could not be redistributed to other areas of the kiln easily. Consequently, clamp-fired material included a greater percentage of under- and over-burned wasters.

architectural elements (chimneys, cellars, etc.), increased reference to indentured servants trained as brick makers, and the increase of a home-grown group of self-trained brick makers. The marked increase in the number of chimneys, foundations, floors, and full-brick non-domestic buildings (churches, courthouses, etc.) reflected the new demand for this skill set. It also increased the prevalence of brick making in a single location, any major project requiring significant investment in infrastructure, skilled labor, and raw materials that subsequent projects which might follow in quick succession, such as ancillary support buildings, could utilize these resources.²⁴⁰

While there was no set size for bricks in the colonial period, there was a relative consistency between the bricks made at any given time, the skill of a brick maker reflected in their quality standards and attention to detail. A batch of 3,000-5,000 bricks from a single firing of a brick kiln or surface clamp required the excavation of approximately 675 cubic feet of clay. This is the rough equivalent of a fifteen-foot diameter, three-foot-deep hole in the ground, matching one found during excavations on the site. Clay extraction for the amount of bricks necessary to construct the manor house would require between 54,000 and 90,000 cubic feet of clay, likely excavated from within the approximately ten-acre formal and administrative center of the plantation. The large range highlights the uncertainty that came with brick making where over-fired, under-fired, and otherwise unusable bricks might represent a significant portion of the total amount fired.²⁴¹

²⁴⁰ Philip Levy, David Muraca, and John Coombs, "Revisioning Seventeenth-Century Virginia Architecture, Brick by Brick." Paper delivered at the Society for Historical Archaeology, Annual Conference, January, Quebec, Quebec, 2000.

²⁴¹ For contemporary estimates of clay to bricks, see Joseph Moxon, *Mechanick Exercises: Or the Doctrine of Handy-Works. Applied to the Arts of Smithing Joinery Carpentry Turning Bricklayery. To which is Added Mechanick Dyalling: ... The Third Edition* (London, 1703). The number of bricks



West and south profiles of the northeast quarter, clay borrow pit (Feature 12).
The Fairfield Foundation, White Marsh, Virginia.

All attempts were likely made by Lewis Burwell II and his contractors to use any useable clays extracted during the excavation of the manor house cellar. A good brick maker preferred clays from the first three feet beneath the organically rich dark topsoil and while elsewhere this clay extraction left a substantially altered landscape, at least in this instance it served two goals. The cellar excavation produced one easy source of clay, about 8,300 cubic feet, which had to be removed anyways and might be put to good use in making bricks. That amount is a relatively small percentage (<15%), though, of the total amount needed. The remaining clay required excavation

estimated for the construction of Fairfield is based on a thorough analysis of the late nineteenth-century photographs of the house and a thorough documentation of the brick foundations.

of "borrow pits," relatively shallow, large diameter holes dug in nearby fields. One or two of these open craters could be filled with domestic debris and covered over with topsoil leaving barely any trace of their excavation. But the amount of clay needed for this project would require the excavation of nearly a dozen pits, likely outpacing the production of trash or the available topsoil, leaving the excavation areas open, pock-marking the area surrounding the manor house. Alternatively, clay could be mined from the sides of ravines leading down to springs and ice ponds, such as those seen to the west and north of the Fairfield manor house. Still, the amount of clay needed for brick making required something akin to mining into the side of the ravine. Considering this as the more likely option for extracting this much clay, borrow pits perhaps reserved for smaller projects, it confronts anyone experiencing the current landscape to question what might be "natural" topography, and what was a result of the substantial earthmoving necessary to create the manor house bricks.²⁴²

The size of the kiln or clamp depended entirely on the skill of the brick maker and his crew. A ten-foot-square area of scorched earth, located about fifty feet west of the Fairfield manor house, likely resulted from a surface clamp of a slightly larger size. Clamps required less effort than kilns and were situated on the ground surface. Built entirely out of the green, unfired brick, the "structure" was essentially dismantled after firing. It burned so hot, for so long, that it baked the clay more than a foot beneath the ground surface. An approximately fifteen-foot-square clamp with four tunnels, measuring about thirteen feet tall, would produce about 20,000 bricks. This

²⁴² Cox, *Brickmaking: A History and Gazetteer*, 3; Norman Davey, *A History of Building Materials* (London, 1961): 65, 158-159; Metz, "Cities of Brick." It is possible that Feature 12 represents a clay mixing pit as well, the presence of significant quantities of over-fired and under-fired brick constituting a large portion of the feature fill suggesting a nearby kiln or clamp.

block of burning clay was not an anomaly on the plantation landscape. Groups of these squat, ceramic pillars dotted the surrounding acreage for many months, alongside the worker's quarters, mixing areas, drying sheds, and other elements of an industrial, albeit temporary, landscape.²⁴³

Just as holes for clay extraction dotted the landscape, the skyline changed as forests fell to the axe. Workers brought countless buckets, wheel barrows and carts full of clay and sand from the fields, ravines, and creek beds to the kilns. They also brought oyster and clam shells from nearby Carter Creek, Carter Bay, and the York River for making mortar. Most importantly, they brought cords of firewood from timbered trees in the surrounding forest necessary for burning the lime and brick kilns. Conservative estimates required one cord of hardwood (128 cubic feet) for every 1000 bricks burned and the presence of glazed brick suggests firings with hickory or oak, at least on those occasions, perhaps pine or another softer wood used more generally.²⁴⁴

The Fairfield manor house required at least 400,000 bricks. With clamps of about 20,000 bricks each, nearly twenty of these would be necessary at a total cost of 400 cords of wood (51,200 cubic feet). Due to the time and energy necessary to fire bricks, and the attention needed to produce a good batch, it is unlikely that all of the bricks for the manor house were fired at one time. In the first half of the eighteenth century, the massive home of the Lee family in Westmoreland County, Stratford Hall,

²⁴³ Houghton, *A Collection of Letters*, 189; P.J. Drury, "Post-Medieval Brick and Tile Kilns at Runsell Green, Danbury, Essex," in *Post-Medieval Archaeology* 9 (1975). Kilns were typically stacked to a height of fourteen or fifteen feet. Edward Dobson estimated that an average-sized kiln measuring fifteen-by-twenty feet could hold up to 40,000 bricks per firing; Edward Dobson, "A Rudimentary Treatise on the Manufacture of Brick and Tiles." Original Date 1850. Reprinted in *Journal of Ceramic History*, No.5, edited by Francis Celoria. (Stafford, England, 1971), I: 12, 41. Loads of 20,000 to 30,000 appear to have been more typical; Goldthwaite, *The Building of Renaissance Florence*, 179.

²⁴⁴ Other estimates suggest only a half cord of wood was necessary for every 1000 bricks in the kiln. Richard P. O' Conner, *A History of Brickmaking in the Hudson Valley*. Ph.D. dissertation, Department of American Civilization, University of Pennsylvania, 1987: 54.

fired about 112,000 bricks per year over a five-to-six-year period, for about 600,000 bricks total. Using a similar approach, albeit a half century earlier, Fairfield would require a slightly shorter period.²⁴⁵

Using comparative estimates for the density of hardwood forests in late seventeenth-century Virginia (approximately twenty-five cords/acre), and assuming that brick makers and their assistants tended and fueled the fires continuously for about a week, the manufacture of brick for the manor house alone required clearing no less than sixteen acres of old growth forest. To put this into perspective, an eighteenth-century plantation of similar size might consume a cord to a cord-and-a-half each day simply to heat the house in the winter months. The construction of the house might consume the equivalent of one to two years worth of wood fuel. Whenever possible, forest clearing coincided with newly expanded fields or other landscape changes, providing dual benefits. But this relatively sudden demand for considerable amounts of wood fuel substantially increased the rate of deforestation at Fairfield plantation and must have made a measurable impact on the landscape and its occupants.²⁴⁶

²⁴⁵ Jason Whitehead, personal communication, Director of Colonial Williamsburg Foundation's Department of Historic Masonry Trades/Brickyard, 2012.

²⁴⁶ University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension, *Estimating Firewood from Standing Trees*, [http://extension.unh.edu/resources/files/Resource001044_Rep1200.pdf, accessed 11 October 2013]; see also United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, *American Forests: A History of Resiliency and Recovery* [<http://www.fs.fed.us/pl/rpa/amforest.pdf>, accessed 11 October 2013], and Richard Neve, *Neve's The City and Country Purchaser and Builder's Dictionary* (1726) (New York, 1969). The acquisition of timber suitable for house framing and shingles or shakes for the roof (a surface area covering no less than 4000 square feet) required additional timbering. Estimating that the original shingles measured about four inches by eighteen inches, a modern mill might recover 3,500 shingles per cord. Assuming less efficient practices in the late seventeenth century, and slightly smaller shingles with exposures measuring about thirty-two square inches, roofing the house required at least 18,000 shingles or about five cords of wood. Increasing that by the amount of timber necessary to frame the building and not yet counting the amount of raw material waste inherent in the construction process (conservatively 20%), the amount of trees cut down would have been one of the greatest in the history of the property.

But these dramatic, large-scale, and immediate impacts to the plantation's forested acreage required in the construction of the manor house paled in comparison to the effects of forty years of tobacco farming. Lewis Burwell II controlled thousands of acres of land, but by the time he built his manor house the nearest old-growth forest of any substantial note was likely a considerable distance from his house. Laborers would need to spend additional time transporting this fuel, in addition to cutting down, cutting up, and stacking the wood, a process that took more effort than the common field clearing method of girdling trees. Despite these added challenges, he chose to construct his new manor house in an environment of great familiarity rather than relocate closer to a very necessary raw material. He relied on his labor force to transport these materials from further away, thinning or wholesale clearing the nearby swamps and ravines, and potentially looking to neighboring property owners across Carter Creek or further south who may have had relatively close forested acreage.

The point of listing these estimated impacts related to the manor house construction is to document the scale of landscape modification necessary for implementing the centerpiece of a designed plantation landscape. An investment this large involved procuring substantial amounts of raw materials and dedicating significant labor towards the endeavor, specifically a workforce increasingly populated by enslaved Africans and perhaps impossible without them at the end of the seventeenth century. Due to the elite merchant-planter's reliance on tobacco profits as their primary source of income, it is likely that Lewis Burwell II did not pursue this massive building campaign in lieu of his agricultural endeavors, but rather contemporaneous with them. Time, as this member of the gentry knew it, did not stop

and wait for his house to be built. Without records which explicitly reference how he pursued this project, though, it falls on the physical remains of his undertaking to serve as the testament to his actions.

It is certain that Burwell contracted with skilled craftsmen, hired day laborers, and found temporary hires for any labor shortages; this project would have been impossible without them. He inherited a handful of skilled enslaved African craftsmen from his uncle-in-law, including the carpenters and artisan referenced in Chapter 3. He may have had access to skilled craftsmen from England or those working with other elite merchant-planters through his connections with the construction of the College of William and Mary, although the same may have been true in reverse (that project utilizing craftsmen brought over to build Fairfield).²⁴⁷

Lewis Burwell II also likely rededicated his enslaved laborers and any remaining indentured servants to cover occasional shortages. But enslaved laborers may have played an even more prominent role in this equation. A gradual increase in the number of enslaved laborers may have been one of the most important factors in considering the viability of this undertaking. Greater control over their everyday lives, along with a shift towards greater investment in expanding the plantation infrastructure, resulted in an occasional surplus of time or, read differently, proved that it was possible to maintain expected levels of tobacco production and accomplish other substantial projects. Whether the clearing of fields for crops or for fuel to fire

²⁴⁷ Carl R. Lounsbury, *Essays in Early American Architectural History: A View from the Chesapeake* (Charlottesville, 2011): 202-203. See also, James D. Kornwolf, "So Good a Design": *The Colonial Campus of the College of William and Mary: Its History, Background, and Legacy* (Williamsburg, 1989).

bricks, the realm of possibilities for these enslaved Africans' time made possible dreams seldom considered.

Compared against a rough estimate of the number of enslaved Africans living on the home plantation of a family of similar accomplishment and wealth, the Burwells may have owned around seventy slaves at this time. This estimate includes the 39 enslaved Africans inherited from Nathaniel Bacon the Elder. The number is conservative when compared to his contemporary, John Carter II, who owned 107 slaves at his death in 1690 (more than two-and-a-half times what his father, Robert Carter I, owned in 1669) while significantly above the twenty or thirty slaves commonly owned by the wealthiest local elites of this period. Burwell's location along the York River made his acquisition of enslaved Africans easier and supports an argument for an even larger workforce. Coombs notes that "According to land patents, planters along the York imported the largest number of blacks during the century" largely due to the older settlements but also the area's suitability for growing milder, sweet-scented tobacco. These factors attracted slave traders more to this area than the other rivers. Quoting a letter from William Fitzhugh from this period, Coombs notes that "There are some Negro ships expected into York now every day."²⁴⁸

All of these individuals likely worked in the fields at some point, whether at the home quarter or at a distant quarter or satellite plantation. Some may have spent long periods away from the fields, developing greater experience working alongside

²⁴⁸ Lancaster County, Loose Inventories (1650-1705); Lancaster County, Wills, Etc. VIII (1690-1709): ff., 15-20; Coombs, *Building "The Machine,"* 79-81, 87, 90, quotes 79 & 87; William Fitzhugh to Ralph Wormeley II, 19 June 1681, in Richard Beale Davis, ed., *William Fitzhugh and His Chesapeake World, 1676-1701: The Fitzhugh Letters and Other Documents* (Chapel Hill, 1963): 93.

skilled craftsmen making bricks and mortar, framing the house, or shingling the roof. A benefit of this construction project, whether intentional or by default, was the development of a skilled enslaved labor force consisting of Africans who essentially performed a form of apprenticeship with the contracted craftsmen who built the manor house. This is not to say that the enslaved Africans working on the site received the same level of instruction or benefitted from the same economic potential that came with this investment of time and instruction. It is likely that some enslaved Africans, including those from the Senegambian region that made up a significant percentage of Fairfield's labor force, were already trained craftsmen, whether carpenters, blacksmiths, or perhaps familiar with other construction trades.²⁴⁹ Rather, the slave's value increased, in some cases literally, and their role on the plantation changed with different work schedules or at the very least a greater variety of tasks. This would leave even the most skilled plantation manager with difficult choices for when to prioritize progress on the house and other construction projects versus increasing the number of acres under cultivation and the creation of additional quarters.

As with any construction project, managing labor and resources would not always result in preferred outcomes and often caused additional problems throughout the plantation. A gradual increase in the number of laborers required a commensurate increase in the support network which would house, feed, and generally maintain them. Developing a supporting infrastructure required further changes in the landscape, including the construction of quarters, general support spaces and structures (i.e. garden plots, increased food storage, etc.), and specialized buildings (drying sheds, saw pits, brick kilns, lime kilns, etc.) located in relative close proximity

²⁴⁹ Walsh, "Migration, Society, Economy, & Settlement," 54.

to the laborers' tasks. These buildings and activities created new spaces within a finite area and must be considered within the context of an expanding plantation landscape. Largely temporary, albeit for multiple years, and potentially relocated and repurposed after their intended use, some were torn down and left little evidence as the landscape transformed into its final design and further evolved thereafter. With few references in surviving documents, and little study by scholars, this important part of the plantation landscape remains a mystery, understudied and seldom discussed. These landscape elements, though, further confirm the powerful role enslaved African labor had in implementing widespread landscape change while maintaining and extending substantial profits for the property owner. They are forgotten elements of both the black and white landscapes.

Clay and timber were not the only raw material needs for a construction project of this size and complexity, but they were likely the most accessible. Lewis Burwell II relied on importing many items from merchants in England, adding significant time to the project to accommodate trans-Atlantic shipment. Some items might be bought locally, from the agent of an English merchant or from one of the small port towns struggling across the Tidewater area, such as the port at Tyndall's Point (soon to be renamed Gloucester Town) or nearby Yorktown on the south side of the York River. Wrought nails of varying lengths and types (such as finishing nails for floors), door hardware (latches, locks, hinges, etc.), and very basic tools, such as axes, saws, and hammers, would have been relatively easy to come by compared to more specialized, custom-made elements such as carved stonework for fireplace mantels or glazed windows. These were not produced easily on the Virginia plantations of this period as

the colony lacked access to the raw materials (iron, stone) and skilled laborers (blacksmiths, stone carvers) to produce these items locally. Lewis Burwell II's connections in England, perhaps through his connections with Mr. Richard Starkey or Mr. Iaack Jamart (both London merchants), or a distant relative or tobacco agent, provided the services he needed along with his purchase of other goods for himself and his family.²⁵⁰

Lewis and Abigail Burwell specifically acquired and incorporated imported, specialized items as status symbols within their redesigned landscape. The introduction of these items demonstrated the family's access to a world of craftsmen and technology inaccessible to the majority of colonists. Ordering new items, described in detail, but paid for sight unseen, may have resulted in uncertain outcomes. Imagine ordering a new set of dishes, linen for drapes, or a fireplace mantel. Without the relatively modern conveniences of an illustrated catalog, any order could result in disappointment. Colors might be off, tastes might change, or the item may not match well with the Virginia climate. But the desire for these items, tempered with a certain confidence from knowing their surroundings, overruled any counter-arguments and made the risk reasonable enough for the purchaser. Perhaps the most exciting risk for Lewis Burwell II and his family were their significant investment in a new style of windows.

Based on surviving archaeological and photographic evidence, Lewis Burwell II incorporated highly fashionable wood sash windows in his Fairfield manor house from its initial design, the first instance in the colony. A technological marvel on par with nearly any other during this period, this style of window introduced much more

²⁵⁰ YCDOW X (1694-1697): 294, 367.

light into interior spaces. They were easy to open and close and brought in the breeze while keeping the cold outside, and quickly became a status symbol among the merchant-planter elite. Most of their homes incorporated the more typical casement windows of the period. Commonly manufactured with small, diamond-shaped panes connected with strips of lead and held together as a unit by an iron frame, the costly, typically small panes served to provide only light rather than sight.

The sash window, in a wood frame with larger panes, significantly improved this design, changing the function and appearance of the home's interior as much as its exterior. This expanded the potential number and length of activities within the household, such as reading, entertaining, and general appreciation for the detailed decoration of household furniture, ceramics, and other material culture. To be the first to introduce this technology to the colony and, later, to The College of William and Mary, demonstrated an architectural vision and sophistication worthy of admiration by others. As word spread among his contemporaries, these windows and this new house attracted visitors from across the uppermost social circles and elevated the status of the Burwell's house, and family, to the highest echelon of society.

The resulting landscape of construction, the temporary and permanent changes to the environment, and the group of people that developed around it, created a colonial curiosity. Whether an exciting spectacle eagerly shown to one's peers, or an ugly, dirty, industrial calamity of unsightly proportions, the multi-year process of building the manor house and its surroundings would have been as interesting as the final product. The presence of field laborers, the majority enslaved Africans, mixed

within and primarily populating this spectacle, underscores Virginia's changing demographics. The number of people involved in the day-to-day task of construction brought as much attention to the property as the form of the chimneys or the light piercing through the new windows. A project of this size was a rare sight. A mix of indentured servants and enslaved Africans, redirected from field tasks or dedicated exclusively to the project, dug the clay, hauled the timber, mixed the mortar, and supplied the many other necessary tasks. A support network sprung up to house, feed, and generally accommodate their basic needs, augmenting the already substantial changes within the existing landscape.²⁵¹

Out of the ground, literally, grew an enormous building taller than almost any other in the colony. Built in a T-shape, Lewis and Abigail insisted on building chimneys along all three gables. Large rectangular brick chimney blocks, decorated with glazed headers, and mouse-tooth dentils along their cornice, weighed down the east and west gables as three diagonally-set stacks rose from their tops, nearly as tall as the surrounding tree line. At the south gable they built a smaller version, with two diagonally-set stacks, the tops of which were barely visible above the roofline for visitors standing in the formal courtyard. The chimney stack design is frequently compared to those built in 1665 at Arthur Allen's "brick house" in Surry County (aka "Bacon's Castle") and later in the early eighteenth century at Winona in Northampton County on Virginia's Eastern Shore. These are the only two surviving examples from a likely popular style of the mid-to-late 17th century. But the buildings share little

²⁵¹ This is not to say that the surprise came from seeing European and African laborers working side by side, especially on the plantation of an elite merchant-planter. This was apparent in the fields as well as around the house, noted by observers and referenced earlier in Chapter 3. See Danckaerts et al., 216. Rather, the combination of these people working on this type project, and the process and extent of their changing the landscape, would have been noteworthy.

else in common other than their brick fabric, further complicating our understanding of the Burwells' design of their manor house.

There are so few surviving seventeenth-century masonry buildings that by chance some architectural elements may seem more common, or rare, because of a small sample size. And sharing common architectural elements might lead to a mistaken belief that the buildings share common origins and style. The distinctive chimneys shared by Lewis Burwell II and Arthur Allen I's brick house (see Chapter 6) are a case in point. Carl Lounsbury points out, though, that Bacon's Castle is more heavily influenced by "artisan mannerism, which seems to have informed the designs of Governor Berkeley's Green Spring, John Page's house at Middle Plantation, and the seventeenth-century churches of Bruton and St. Luke Parish's (James City and Isle of Wight Counties, respectively), with their curvilinear gables, undulating surfaces of niches and projections, and free form use of classical elements." On the other hand, Fairfield does not trend towards that style, rather it incorporates a more fashionable attention to symmetry, incorporates sash windows, a hipped roof and a classical cornice, and Flemish bond with all glazed headers, each the first example known in the colony. While the diagonally-shaped chimney stacks connected the Fairfield manor house with an established architectural vocabulary, the Fairfield manor house looked much further to the future rather than backwards to the building precedents of mid-seventeenth-century Virginia. The end result was the colony's premier example of the emerging "Classical" architectural style, including bold symmetry, restrained

ornament, and a direct connection with larger landscape plans extending far beyond the manor house.²⁵²



Brass finial recovered from excavations along the manor house facade.
The Fairfield Foundation, White Marsh, Virginia.

A case in point for the synthesis of two styles, one established and one emerging, is the building's primary entrance. Facing north towards a spring-fed ravine, visitors ascended a set of thick, imported sandstone stairs, using iron handrails with ornate brass finials, rising five feet from the ground surface. A row of five dormers pierced the hipped roof along the north facade, visually framed by the massive end chimneys while matching a parallel row of first floor windows below. The size and symmetrical placement of the windows gave the building a strong sense of balance and rhythm while increasing the potential living areas within the house, lighting the spacious garret rooms, converting this significant space into a functional living area, while visually elevating the house as their own rooflines pointed skyward.

²⁵² Lounsbury, Personal Communication.

A two-and-a-half-story wing extended from the center of the main house block to the south, completing the T-shaped layout and maintaining the elevated roofline. Rather than the spacious and lofty rooms of the northern block, this "south wing" contained several modest rooms with lower ceilings, visually delineated on the exterior by a belt course between the first and second floors, and lit by windows in the east and west walls and in the garret. The careful placement of windows and the relatively narrow rooms created well ventilated spaces, perhaps with additional windows and an exterior door in the south gable, providing additional access to the building's interior. Entrances into the full English cellar, extending nearly five feet below the ground surface, provided access into the subterranean storage and work area and alternative access to the building interior, likely through a connecting internal stair. This space effectively doubled the building's square footage, adding an entire additional floor to the design.

Constructing a building this complex required craftsmen, a group rarely found in seventeenth-century Virginia. Lewis and Abigail understood this and, while all of their names may never be known, a few were likely noted in Nathaniel Bacon the elder's will (see earlier this chapter and Chapter 3). But craftsmen were more than just the producers of product or the creators of walls, roofs, and windows. They were prominent purveyors of ideas and a significant influence on the design of any building. Carl Lounsbury writes that "rather than a static method whose source emanated from an architect's drawings and set of written specifications, the conceptualization and execution of a building's design from its plan to its ornamentation was far more fluid, as clients, contractors, and craftsmen played important and often variable roles in the

process."²⁵³ The answer to the question of "how did Lewis and Abigail Burwell design such a new style of building?" is *they* didn't, rather, it was a product of their work with craftsmen and others, a coalescence of ideas pulling on the experience and dreams of their peers, their family, local preachers and visitors to the plantation, but most importantly the craftsmen that they hired to make their dreams a reality. Expanding on this idea, Lounsbury states "although the history of design in the early Chesapeake centers upon the introduction and adaptation of metropolitan ideas, the course of that transformation was charted on the construction site and at the workbench."



East and north profile of the 1694 manor house southwest corner builder's trench highlighting the brick rubble, dust and sand layers beneath.
The Fairfield Foundation, White Marsh, Virginia.

The craftsmens' skills are visible in how they adapted to the environmental conditions of the building site. For instance, the brick masons recognized the difficulty of laying a foundation in very sandy soils. They prepared the ground beneath the

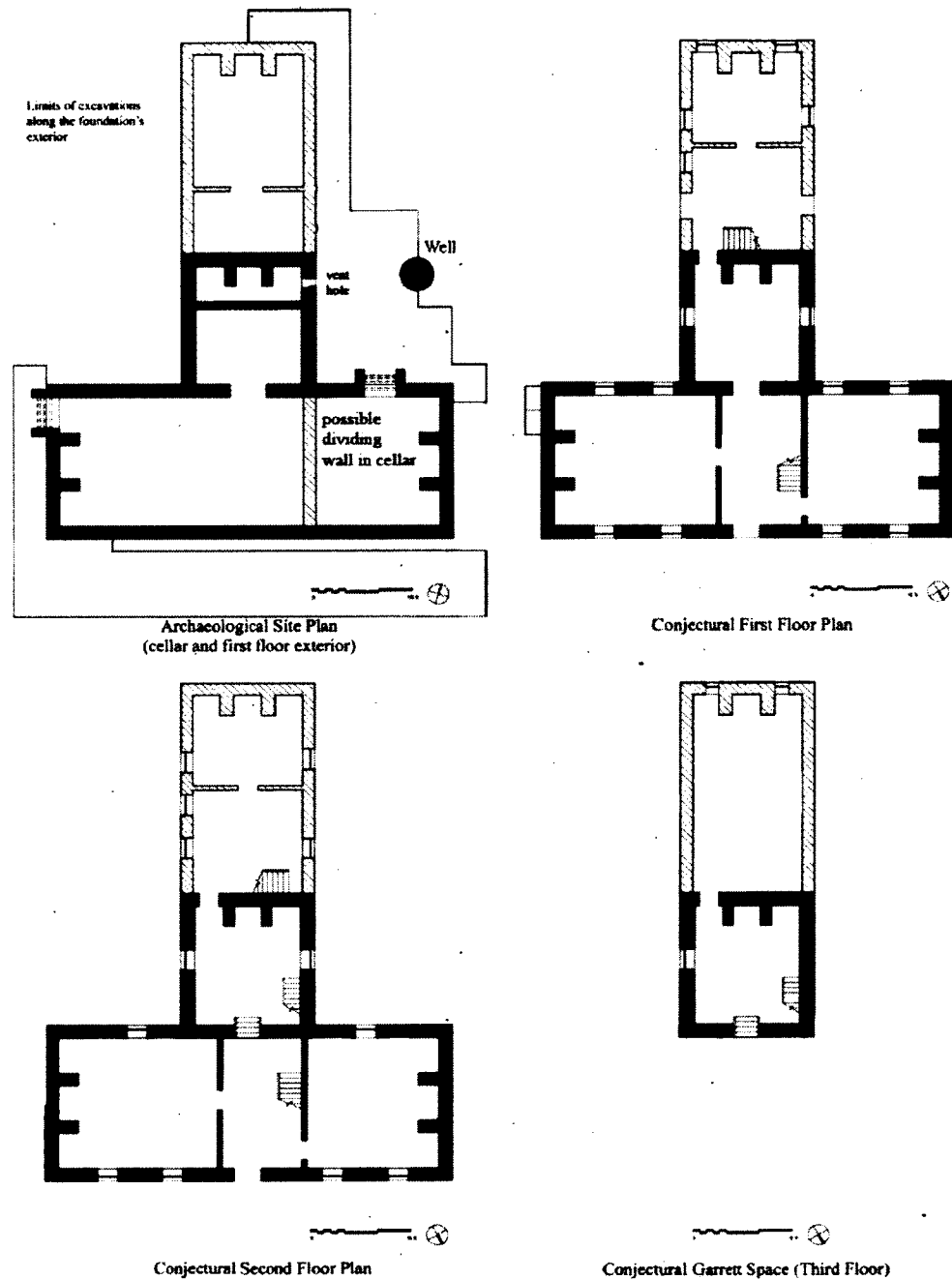
²⁵³ Carl R. Lounsbury, "The Design Process" in Carson and Lounsbury, *The Chesapeake House*, 64, 66, 68; Lounsbury goes further to state that 68 "for the most part craftsmen were left on their own to resolve framing issues and devise finish details based on their expertise and recognized standards."

brick foundation by excavating the foundation trench much deeper than necessary, filling it with a series of base layers that helped ensure the two-foot-thick foundation would settle properly. Using alternating layers of crushed brick, brick dust, and sand, they prepared a footing which reduced the chance of inconsistent compaction of the soil beneath the foundation, assuring stability for the building's unusual height and weight, while potentially helping water drain away from the house, keeping the cellar drier. The expert skills of the masons are exemplified in the fine quality of the knocked and scored mortar joints along the entirety of the Flemish-bond with glazed header foundation, which extended for the full depth of the foundation, beyond view and beneath the ground surface where few would ever see them. Lewis and Abigail apparently insisted on a uniform and consistent application of the best techniques of the day, although it certainly cost in considerable additional time and energy,

The manor house cellar had four rooms. Beneath the north section of the house were two relatively large rooms separated by a central passage leading to a vaulted cellar beneath the south wing. The vaulted cellar connected to the north block of rooms through a wide doorway. The room ended abruptly, perhaps to accommodate the chimney base on the south gable, creating an unusually small space between the vaulted cellar and the south gable.²⁵⁴ Burwell designed the two large rooms beneath the north section with interior access from the center passage and exterior access via cellar entrances on the east gable and south elevation of the west

²⁵⁴ The five-and-a-half foot wide room is inaccessible from other cellar rooms, but access may have been possible via a trap door from the room above. A small ventilation hole or window along the west wall allowed air and some light into the room. The chimney foundations extend into the room, limiting its utility and accessibility. The room above may have been the primary bedchamber, so access to this small space below would have been restricted, and perhaps useful for storing specialized items.

wing. The west cellar room included a kitchen, the wide fireplace of the massive gable chimney providing sufficient space for preparing foods of all types with multiple



Fairfield manor house floor plans.
The Fairfield Foundation, White Marsh, Virginia.

fires (and multiple flues). The eastern fireplace showed no evidence of use and the cellar room may have served as storage and likely living space for enslaved Africans or indentured servants working within the house.

The four-room plan is the likely template for the first floor, repeating the increasingly popular center passage layout that placed the Fairfield manor house at the forefront of house design in the colony. In contrast, the hall-and-parlor layout dominated most Virginia house designs in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, dividing interior space into public (hall) and private (parlor) rooms. The center passage plan, initially incorporated in the designs of wealthier households at the end of the seventeenth century, further compartmentalized interior space, resulting in additional degrees of segregation, restricting access to the public while reserving private functions for a select group of friends, family, or business partners. The symmetrical layout of Fairfield's north façade supports this attitude towards design, suggesting an interior that balanced the new rules of exterior design with the changing need for new spaces, increasing visibility from the building's interior, while incorporating the influence of the surrounding environment to the benefit of the owner's health and comfort through greater air circulation and interior light.²⁵⁵

The interior room divisions, window placement, ceiling heights, and location of stairways are reflective of a designer's understanding of emerging architectural styles and the difficulties of building in Virginia's environment. A significant challenge to the building's design, and to our understanding of it, is the interconnection of the south wing and the north block, particularly above the first floor. The staircase, likely in the center passage, provided access to the garret and

²⁵⁵ Carson, "Plantation Housing: Seventeenth Century," 110.

possibly to the second story room in the south wing.²⁵⁶ Because the ceiling heights are different for each section, separate stairs may have been built for each, and direct access limited from one to the other. This would have resulted in a true "rear wing" that would have provided greater security but also isolation. The first floor room within the south wing was most likely a bed chamber, while the two front rooms flanking the center passage served as a hall and parlor, or perhaps an early dining room and parlor. The second story room in the south wing included a fireplace and likely functioned as a bedroom, with a small garret above. The large, low-ceilinged garret above the main part of the house served as additional sleeping space and storage, lit by the five dormer windows along the north facade and four others on the south elevation.

The emergence of a third room on the first floor suggests a increasing need for additional space accessible to a select group of visitors. While the residents of the house had access to the majority of the interior, excepting the occasional locked cabinet or cellar room, visitors' access depended greatly on their status. A business colleague or neighbor wishing to talk with Lewis Burwell II about a court case or serve as security for a land purchase might pass through the porch into the hall. Family friends and peers might penetrate further, gaining access to the parlor for informal occasions. The increasing need for acceptable entertainment spaces required redefining interior spaces or constructing new ones. While the designation of the south room as a bedchamber makes logical sense as the larger, more spacious rooms

²⁵⁶ A standing example, roughly contemporary with Fairfield, is the Harriton House in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. A two-story with garret, random fieldstone, T-shaped plan house built circa 1704, it incorporates an interior stair within a forward portion of the rear tower, rather than the entirety of the tower, similar to other cross-pattern or T-shaped houses of the Chesapeake region and other colonies. See Harriton House, Nomination, National Register of Historic Places (1972).

took on the roles of entertainment spaces, it was likely frequented by more visitors than rooms on the second story or the cellar, although most likely only by the closest of friends.

The emerging design criteria of symmetry, mass, and rhythm in a balanced exterior challenged Lewis and Abigail to reconcile the needs of the interior with exterior display. A case in point are the diagonally-set chimney stacks. The logical observation of one flue per opening aligns with the heating of eight rooms. The south wing had only two chimney stacks, suggesting they heated the first and second floor rooms, leaving the garret unheated (the cellar vault did not incorporate a fireplace). The garret, as the smallest of the building's rooms, might be unheated, although lighting from the dormer windows suggests it may have served as a living space. More difficult to understand was the relationship between the east and west garret rooms in the house's north block. The placement of the chimney block as it penetrates the hipped roof leaves too small an opening to accommodate a fireplace in the garret, leaving the entire upper story unheated. In addition, there is no evidence of a fire ever having burned in the east cellar room, leaving potentially three flues to service a single fireplace on the first floor. This evidence suggests that the stacks falsely represent the inner-workings of the manor house, never directly correlating with their inferred function, revealing an alternative meaning for their construction. They reflected the attention to design and symmetry increasingly important to the elite in their manor houses, even at the cost of creating expensive architectural elements that never functioned as designed.

The elite started constructing large brick manor houses just as wealth and easy credit began to outpace useful expenditures and investments. Put another way, Lewis and Abigail built their Fairfield manor house to impress. They built it differently than any other house in the colony and it drew attention for its design, for its use of new technology, and for its size. The curious elements included in this building, though, suggest that there may have been an alternative use for it. Lewis Burwell II's parent's house remained standing through the early eighteenth century, serving as both a connection to the past, but also a potentially contrasting and out-of-place element of the new plantation design. Alternatively, it remained an integral element of the new landscape and accentuated rather than hindered the design. If this early house remained the primary residence, as historian Cary Carson has suggested, then the newly built manor house may have served an entirely different function.²⁵⁷

Carson's research into the evolution of plantation manor houses in the seventeenth and eighteenth century uncovered occasional, but significant, references to buildings that fell outside of the generally accepted model of elite houses. A handful of what he refers to as "party houses" appear during the latter part of the seventeenth century. An outgrowth of the immense wealth garnered by a few individuals, inspired by the idea of gentile living and entertainment that further separated social classes, these new buildings operated initially as entertainment venues.²⁵⁸ What greater expression of wealth than building one of the largest, most innovative houses in the colony only to have it serve exclusively as a center for entertaining? The gathering of men, and occasionally women, of the highest sort

²⁵⁷ Carson, "Plantation Housing: Seventeenth Century," 106-107.

²⁵⁸ Cary Carson, "Banqueting Houses and the "Need of Society" among Slave-Owning Planters in the Chesapeake Colonies" in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 70 (2013) 4: 725-780.

required food, furnishings, and space for meals, sleeping, and recreational activities. In support of these events, the merchant-planter elite may have initially constructed this and other large brick manor houses with numerous rooms, internal kitchens, public and private spaces, and viewing platforms or large decks with their focus on entertainment.

As much an exhibit as a residence, the concept of a party house is grounded in the idea that elite merchant-planters increasingly depended on acts of display to sustain their position in society. Sophisticated entertainment elevated political and social status and demonstrated economic power. It also required one to know how to entertain and how to be entertained. The exclusivity of this knowledge, and access to the requisite material culture necessary to perform this openly, further separated the elite from the rest of colonial society. It can be summarized by comparison to the emerging ritual of taking tea. Tea drinking required special cups, saucers, and pots, as well as related vessels for adding sugar and holding utensils. These vessels and utensils provided opportunities to exhibit tastes in decorated, fashionable ceramics and metals that would only be used during this specific, entirely unnecessary act of social leisure. The pouring, cooling, and sipping of tea highlighted knowledge of personal behavior. The acquisition of related accessories demonstrated more worldly connections and the wealth and ability to reach beyond the colony in this and other activities. Context was equally important - for tea drinking, or any elite social function - including selection of the appropriate room, building, and surrounding

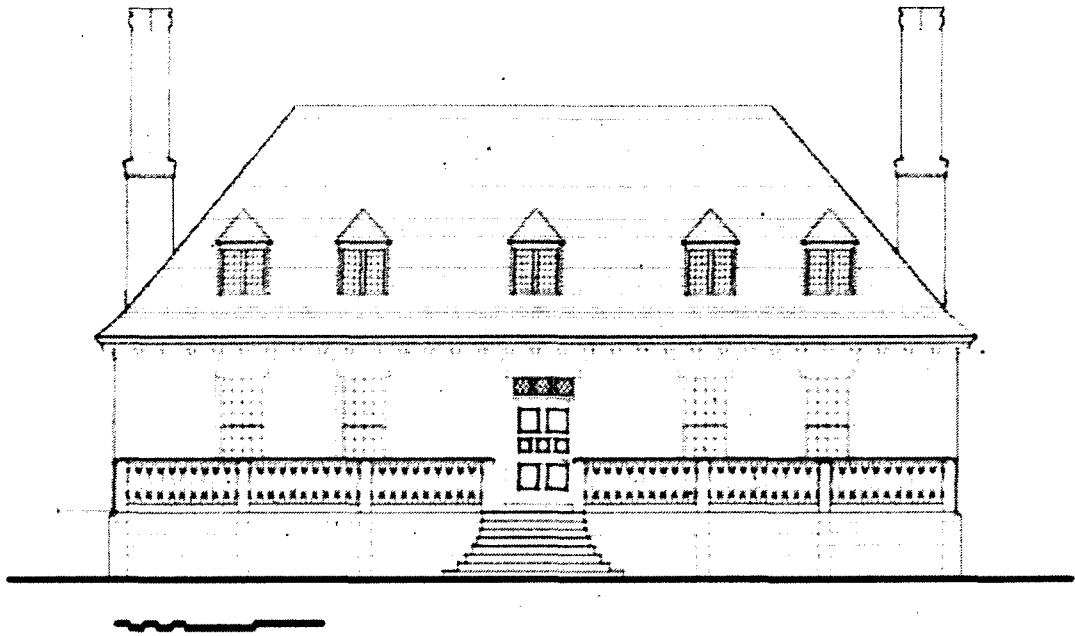
landscape. Each added to the individuals' experience and significantly increased the social capital appreciated (and expended) in this moment.²⁵⁹

Architectural historian Thomas Waterman wrote that "a man's home place – his plantation and his house – were special extensions of the self" and "sacrosanct settings for hospitality and for the open celebration of the major events of life and death."²⁶⁰ Whether a party house or a private residence, the Fairfield manor house incorporated interior spaces large enough for sizeable parties entertaining peers. The accounts of late nineteenth- and twentieth-century visitors and architectural historians list among the rooms in the house a "ball room," evoking images of grand dances between debutantes and their suitors with punch drinks and roast meat dinners. The airy spaces of the first floor rooms at the Fairfield manor house, augmented significantly by the large sash windows along the north and south walls permitting light and air throughout the rooms, produced a feeling of spacious living and entertaining unrivaled in the colony. A visitor later in the house's history, Sally Nelson Robins, recalled the experience, standing in the "huge" ballroom and gazing at the marble mantel-piece, "most magnificent in design and carving, to wonder at the reredos of the fireplace, which was of wood wonderfully carved." She specified that "especially beautiful was a female head carved at the intersection of wooden curtains, which were drawn back with exquisite grace."²⁶¹

²⁵⁹ Rodris Roth, *Tea Drinking in 18th-Century America: Its Etiquette and Equipage* (Washington D.C., 1961). See also, Meredith Mahoney, *Hospitality, Civility, and Sociability: Taking Tea in Colonial Barbados*. M.A. thesis, The College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA, 2007.

²⁶⁰ Waterman, *The Mansions of Virginia*, 71.

²⁶¹ Robins, "The Story of the Removal of the Burwell Tombs"; Emmie Ferguson Farrar, *Old Virginia Houses, The Mobjack Bay Country* (New York, 1955): 17-18.



Conjectural drawing of the Fairfield manor house north facade.
Carson, "Banqueting Houses," 748.

Entertainment, while focused in the hall and, perhaps, the parlor, spilled out into the grounds surrounding the manor house. The porch, situated at the interface between the house interior and exterior, provided the largest of built entertaining spaces. Extending along the entire sixty foot, five-bay north facade, the sixty-foot-long and over ten-foot-wide space added significantly to the square footage of the first floor and created an additional space that further layered socially exclusive space and visually defined the building's exterior, specifically the forecourt, as an active, formal space. It further elevated the status that came with access to the building's interior, with only a select group permitted entry to the building.

These connections between things, activities, and surrounding spaces further demonstrated a knowledge and adherence to accepted modes of class behavior and

social rules practiced in Virginia and beyond. Respecting these qualities, understanding that they added significantly to the cache of being an elite family, became ever more crucial to sustaining positions of prominence in the colony and the legitimacy of the entire class. But the manor house at Fairfield also served as a training ground of sorts for the new world of the eighteenth century. Lewis and Abigail Burwell's integration of new rooms and new room functions forced them and their peers to create new rules, or reinterpret old rules, for behaving in these spaces.

The elite merchant-planters increasingly prioritized maintenance of class cohesion through their often exclusive activities, including gambling and games, such as cockfighting, cards, and especially horse-racing. Extensions of this practice included the design and construction of manor houses and plantation landscapes.²⁶² As early as 1740, Lewis and Abigail's grandson, also named Lewis, raced horses at a nearby track near Joseph Seawell's ordinary.²⁶³ His father, grandfather, and great-grandfather likely participated in similar activities as each owned horses, although there are significantly fewer documents discussing horse racing prior to this period. And while horse-racing was not exclusive to the elite, few in the colony could afford horses much less race them. Only one example of many competitions between the elite, this activity represented much more. It communicated to others the owner's ability and commitment to purchase, train, feed, house, and generally maintain the horse or horses. Ultimately, the horse served as a symbol of this commitment and the

²⁶² At a basic level, the games served to improve positions within the gentry by winning money. But in the case of races, horses served as an "adjunct to virile self-presentation." Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia*, 99-100.

²⁶³ William Glover Stanard, *The Colonial Virginia Register: A List of Governors, Councilors and Other Higher Officials, and Also of Members of the House of Burgesses and Revolutionary Conventions of the Colony of Virginia* (Baltimore, 1965): 254.

power and status of the owner. The process opened the door to a world of complex interactions, mixing cultural values and social behaviors. The public display of these more exclusive competitions, frequently connected with the worlds the elite merchant-planters designed to frame them, strengthened their cultural dominance, legitimizing the “cultural values which racing symbolized – materialism, individualism, and competitiveness.”²⁶⁴

Whether through horse racing, entertainment, or the construction of designed landscapes, the elite merchant-planters created and lived in a world that relied upon symbols. They communicated complex ideas that existed at the intersection between object and action. They relied as much on a shared knowledge of the creation of these objects and actions as their use. And while not every individual understood these symbols in the same way, the shared experience of living on designed plantations created an environment that contextualized these symbols and perpetuated their meaning. The more consistent the understanding of these symbols across the plantation population, the greater likelihood that it would result in profits to the owner and an elevated status for him and his family. Within the process of landscape and building design existed the same competition between elite merchant-planters as seen elsewhere, pushing the plantation owners to take further risks.

Innovation and inspiration, based on personal experience and a drive to separate the plantation from earlier forms, played prominent roles in the design and construction of the Fairfield manor house and its surroundings. For every new innovation, such as the inclusion of enslaved Africans to augment or replace an existing but somewhat limited labor force, there was a moment of inspired design,

²⁶⁴ Breen, *Puritans and Adventurers*, 151, quote 163; Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia*, 99.

such as the inclusion of a craftsman's recommendation (all glazed headers or building entirely in Flemish bond) or an element of a contemporary merchant-planter's house (diagonally-set chimney stacks). But changes in the style and construction of the manor house represent more than responses to environmental conditions, functional improvements in efficient building, or a response to the availability of resources or safety concerns. They marked a material reflection of the increasing divide between elite merchant-planters and the rest of Chesapeake society.

The elite's gradual incorporation of brick, both as a functional building element as well as a decorative and symbolic element, created a visual separator between their homes and the remainder of the region's population (including, at least temporarily, other elites). This extended to non-domestic structures, such as smokehouses, barns, and dairies, and the activities associated with them. The relative rarity of using this material in the larger fabric of a building developed a cross-society association with the elite's identity – rare, solid, uniform, strong. A costly investment, unnecessary for successful home construction and unaffordable and inaccessible for the majority of people within the Chesapeake, the elite incorporated it into their homes because they had the means to do so.

The contrast between brick and wood construction resulted in a new visual dividing line that grouped middling planters with tenants and the enslaved. It more closely connected their homes with the activities of production and the maintenance of their class, rather than as symbol of successfully achieved aspirations. This spurred an increased demand for brick construction by a portion of the population captivated by competition and desperate to distance themselves from those they considered beneath

them. It also encouraged innovation and the incorporation of new elements, stylistic and functional, that would mark them as different.²⁶⁵ But this trend did not arrive overnight. And it existed primarily in a white landscape.

Alongside the social and political cache garnered through ritual, gamesmanship, and entertaining, the process of innovation and inspiration, and the contrasting symbolism of brick and wood construction, was the physical act of building. From design through implementation, and eventually to completion, there was display. Just as tea drinking was an active exhibit of sophisticated knowledge, material culture, and stylized behavior, so too was the construction of the manor house and the surrounding landscape. It took longer, was more expensive, and involved far more than tea, cup, and tea pot, but it was undoubtedly display and incorporated a connection with the world beyond the plantation. And at the center of this display, in the brick clamps, the seemingly endless stacks of firewood, shingles, and lumber, and the stump-riddled landscapes of the newly cleared forest, exhibited for all to see, was the essential enslaved African labor force.

This work force, increasingly defined by the color of its skin, was made to labor in perpetuity for the benefit of others, serving alongside the tobacco plant as the symbolic foundations of elite society. Their involvement in the construction and maintenance of this landscape, the mixing of clay, laying of bricks, timbering forests, and cultivation of tobacco connected them permanently, in the eyes of their owners and those who witnessed these acts (perhaps themselves, too), with these objects, these

²⁶⁵ A progression of this thought would extend to the use of brick in other structures by the elite, expanding the image of home or, at least, of the merchant-planter's domain, reminding visitors that wood structures of the meaner sort were for the exclusive use of the poor, middling sort, the slaves, and the animals.

buildings, and these landscapes. The brick manor house became one of the most prominent symbols of the power of one class of men over other men and the elements of nature. To a degree, this symbolic relationship reclassified enslaved African as a component of nature, intrinsically and permanently connected with the landscape and subservient to its owner.

Chapter 1 discussed the theory that people created landscapes based on their personal experiences and their culture. To assume that enslaved Africans valued brick buildings, tobacco fields, and the products of their labor at Fairfield plantation in the same way as the merchant-planter elite would be counter to that argument. Enslaved Africans, to the extent we can interpret the black landscape, did not assign value to brick buildings, expensive furnishings, and the arrangement of interior rooms in the same way as Europeans. It does not mean they could not understand the message elite merchant-planters wished to convey. Rather, it provided them the opportunity to redefine the landscape in their own terms while transitioning between the two worlds, black and white, to their advantage.

Enslaved Africans participated in the creation of these places and spaces. Within a black landscape these could alternatively be seen as a positive product of their labor, skill, and craftsmanship, or a negative reflection of their near sub-human treatment within the plantation landscape. The increasing involvement of enslaved Africans in non-agricultural tasks, including domestic roles as cooks and servants with access to the manor house's interior spaces, further complicated meanings in the overlapping white and black landscapes. Access to previously isolated spaces,

valuable materials, and intimate exchanges challenged both groups to redefine their worlds and their identities, and to do so within increasingly stratified social contexts.

Inside and out, the manor house was a reflection of the people who made it. It reflected the talents of skilled craftsmen incorporating innovative designs, it highlighted an understanding by the designer of the effects of heat, cold, wind, and rain, it advertised an air of invincibility and, perhaps, immortality, and it reflected the forced labor of enslaved Africans brought into the colony, their freedom stolen, and their futures placed in the hands of people who viewed them as part of a machine determined to develop wealth and perpetuate class. Lastly, from the perspective of Abigail and Lewis Burwell, it reflected the struggle to balance ideas with reality, and the desire for status and sophistication with the necessity of living in Virginia's unique environment.

The investment in brick walls, specifically, provided a greater chance that this symbol would last. A well thought out and properly implemented design included the placement and orientation of the house, centered within the larger landscape, acknowledging the prevailing winds, the heat and light of sunrises and sunsets, and the long sight lines extending across the fields and along the major points of entry into the plantation. This investment provided a well balanced and divided design with distinct activity areas, increased order and efficiency. Together, these investments resulted in a vision, thought out from the beginning, highlighting priorities that bespoke the essential necessities of daily life for elite merchant planters, without ignoring the particulars of contemporary architectural style or the opportunity to compete with

one's peers and establish the highest standard for living in the colony. Its success and emulation by others perpetuated an idea of power and control over mankind and nature that enslaved the entire landscape, including the Africans forced to labor for its creation. It is this connection that was most powerful and lasted for generations to come, extending from the manor house across the newly designed formal plantation.

The chapter that follows extends this discussion beyond the house. The use of experienced and skilled craftsmen, the increasing use of enslaved Africans, and the wealth that came with expanding tobacco cultivation resulted in far more than a new brick manor house. And the factors that influenced plantation designs, including increased political and economic investment in towns, masonry architecture, and the development of public buildings, brought about a reconceptualization of the plantation and its boundaries.

Chapter 5: The Plantation:

"Here your house stands in the middle of all your little world enclosed..."²⁶⁶

The loss of Abigail at the early stages of redesigning Fairfield plantation left Lewis Burwell II without a valuable partner and foil. Even with his daughters helping out where they could, the absence of a counter-opinion to his own left Lewis as the sole decision maker on this evolving plantation design. Perhaps the most significant alternative opinions came from the craftsmen constructing his manor house, but his memories of Abigail and the model of what a elite merchant-planter's wife should be in his mind likely continued to influence his thoughts. The role of plantation mistress remained unfilled for only a short while, though. Lewis Burwell II remarried in November, 1695. Whether for love, for political expediency, or simply to fill the social role of a wife that his daughters could not, his marriage to the widow Martha Lear Cole completed his household. Martha was the eldest daughter of Colonel John Lear (died June 27th, 1696) of Nansemond County, a member of the Governor's Council (1688) and the widow of Colonel William Cole of Bolethorpe, Warwick County, who served as Secretary of State for Virginia (1690-92).²⁶⁷

²⁶⁶ Samuel Hartlib and Cressy Dymock, *A Discoverie for Division or Setting Out of Land as to the Best Form* (London: printed for Richard Wodenothe, 1653); Tim Mowl, *Gentlemen & Players: Gardeners of the English Landscape* (Stroud, 2000): 18.

²⁶⁷ Her father's will, dated November 5th, 1695, left her a portion of all her and her mother's wearing apparel at his house. It also left one third of his estate here, in England or in Caroline, to "Martha Burwell and the children she had by Col. Cole and the land I bought of George Guillian...350 acres," leaving "Son in law Lewis Burwell and my good friend Capt. Thomas Godwin, executors." The will was probated at a court for Nansemond on December 12th, 1695. See J. Bryan Grimes, ed., *North Carolina Wills and Inventories, Copied from Original and Recorded Wills and Inventories in the Office of the Secretary of State* (Bowie, 1998): 281-283. Martha was first married to William Cole II (1638 – March 4th, 1694) of "Baldrup," Warwick County, Virginia, located on the Warwick River near Denbigh. He was an attorney in Warwick and York Counties, Colonel of the military, on the Council starting in March 1675 and lasting for seventeen years, including a stint as Secretary of the Colony after October 22nd, 1689. See no author, "Cole Family," in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 5 (1897), 3: 177-181.

Raised in an established Virginia family, and connected with the powerful Cole lineage, Martha also brought with her substantial wealth and property. And while much of her fortune remained reserved for her children from her prior marriage, Lewis Burwell II managed these assets (along with the resulting profits) in the interim. His skillful management of her estate and his own, along with their carefully orchestrated social endeavors, resulted in his continued rise towards the apex of colonial society and the successful marriage of his children, expanding and extending the family's success for generations to come.

The Fairfield manor house, well underway and potentially near completion, also benefitted from the marriage and the family's continued ascension. An influx of enslaved Africans, an increase in liquid assets, and somewhat predictable yearly profits from even greater agricultural operations resulted in a increasing confidence that spurred further investment in the house and the plantation's surroundings, likely hastening the completion of what was now primarily Burwell's grand vision.²⁶⁸ As the family's fortunes rose, the association between the Burwell family and the plantation grew stronger, visually associating success in politics, society, and family with the landscape.

There is no specific starting date for the Burwell's plantation redesign. Imagined as the total re-conceptualization of Fairfield plantation, it likely began before 1694, perhaps as early as 1692 with the passing of Nathaniel Bacon the Elder, and Lewis Burwell II's role as estate executor. While there are no documents that

²⁶⁸ I believe that the husband and wife each influenced the design of the manor house and plantation landscape. The loss of a first wife in the midst of construction and the arrival of a second wife before its likely conclusion complicates any sense of who influenced what elements. Without knowing which elements started under which marriage, or in the period in between, it is my impression that the primary influence on the design and construction, by default, exists with the one consistent presence throughout.

pinpoint or discuss the completion of the manor house or its grounds, modifications ended sometime before Nathaniel, his eldest son, married Elizabeth Carter before 1708.²⁶⁹ Sometime prior to that date Lewis Burwell II relocated to King's Creek, previously his uncle-in-law's residence, handing over Fairfield plantation to Nathaniel. It is highly unlikely that Lewis Burwell II would leave an incomplete building project to his son. This establishes a period of no greater than sixteen years between the project's initiation and its conclusion.

There is evidence to suggest the majority of this redesign took less time. Lewis Burwell II ascended to the Governor's Council by 1699.²⁷⁰ In the same year the governor appointed him to the Board of the College of William and Mary and designated him a feoffee of the new city of Williamsburg.²⁷¹ Lewis Burwell II joined his half-brother, Philip Ludwell II, and his son-in-law, Benjamin Harrison II, and three others in this endeavor. Historian John Blair interprets their position as having “nearly absolute authority over the sale of lands within the town limits.” Within the same legislation, Lewis Burwell II was, along with nine others, “nominated, authorized, and empowered by the name of the directors...to make such rules and ordere, and to give

²⁶⁹ A marriage by this year makes most sense as the number of interactions between the Burwell and Carter family increases markedly. Elizabeth and Nathaniel are in residence at Fairfield by the following year when, on May 3rd, William Byrd II records in his diary upon a visit that “Mrs. Burwell is a very pretty, good-humored woman but seemed to be a little melancholy, as he did likewise, I know not for what reason.” See Wright and Tinling, *The Secret Diary of William Byrd*; Blair, *The Rise of the Burwells*, 51, n28.

²⁷⁰ As discussed in Chapter 4, Lewis Burwell II was officially appointed to the Governor's Council on August 21st, 1699, but appears to have been voting on issues as early as the year before. It took several years to confirm this appointment. On December 4th of the same year, the Governor's Council wrote of their appointment of Lewis Burwell II and hope that “Mr. Perry to whom we gave Notice of it, will have taken out the Order of the Council for that purpose and sent it to him.” See Blair, *The Rise of the Burwells*, 24, 27; no author, “Council Papers 1698-1700” in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 21 (1913), 4: 389; McIlwaine, *Executive Journals*, Volume I, 392.

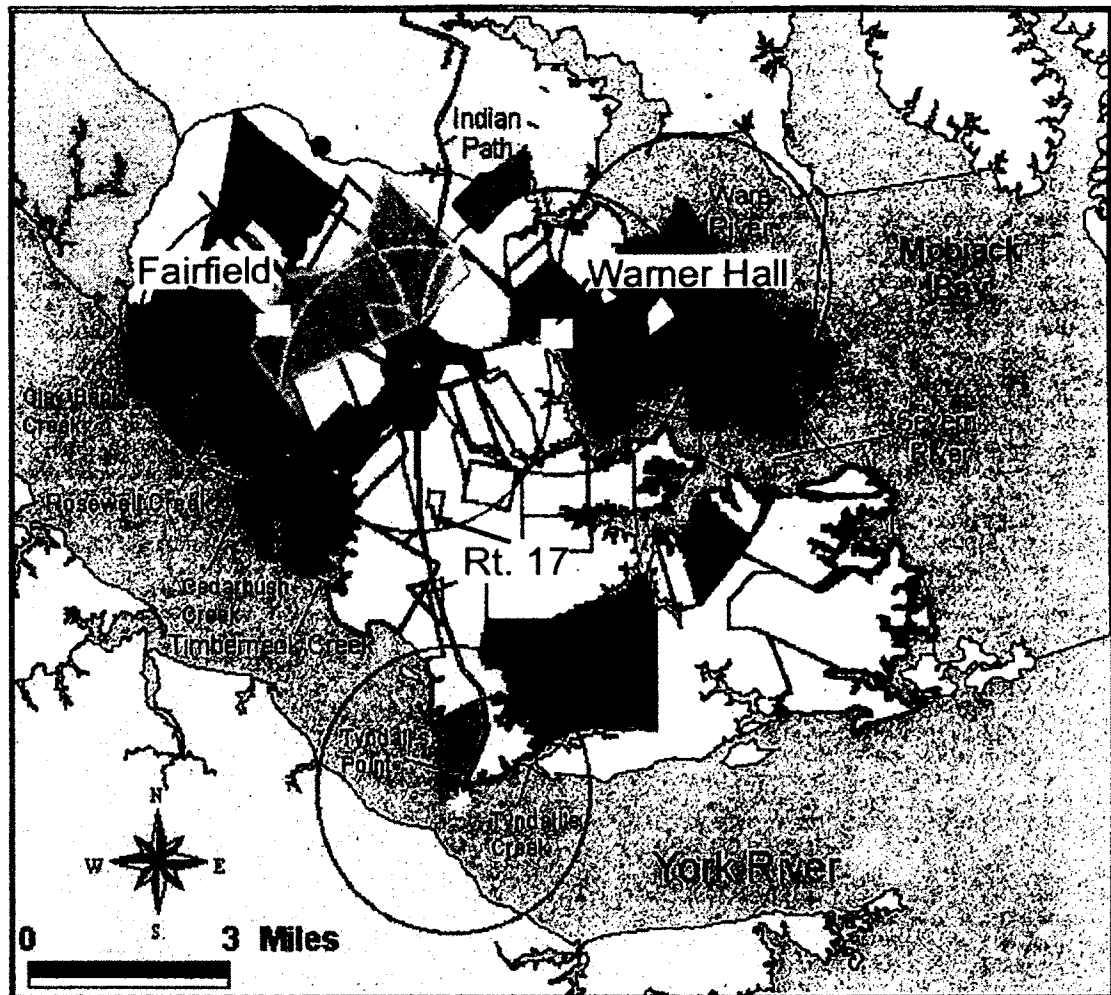
²⁷¹ Blair, *The Rise of the Burwells*, quote 26; William Walter Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia, from the First Session of the Legislature in the Year 1619*. Volume 3 (Charlottesville, 1969): 425-428.

such directions in the building of said city and ports...as to them shall seem best and most convenient." These honors greatly expanded his responsibilities, advertising to society that his valuable experience and connections might better serve projects beyond his plantation. While the period between Abigail's passing and his re-entry into public life included many other activities, none required such a substantial commitment of time, energy, and resources as redesigning his plantation.

The attention necessary to manage a complex construction project such as his manor house demonstrates tremendous skill and ambition. But his vision did not stop with the brick walls and front porch of his house. It extended to the quarters, fields, streams, and roads that connected his plantation with his neighbors, his parish, and his county. His plantation, 3300 acres by this time, was the largest in Abingdon Parish and used significant topography (ravines, creeks, etc.), major roadways ("the Great Pathe," now known as U.S. Rt. 17) and the parish church as boundaries.²⁷² As the landscape reached outwards, its literal and symbolic connection with nature, economy, and the church is inescapable. The plantation's east road led directly to the church's doorsteps - the shared fabric (brick) linking them, members of an exceptional and small group of the colony's most important buildings.

As Lewis Burwell II's influence grew, as his family's wealth increased, and as his ambition looked beyond his manor house, the plantation landscape became the canvas on which he projected his identity. Using the same principals which guided the design and construction of his residence, he embarked on the redesign of his parent's

²⁷² York County Colonial Records Project Files "1704RR"; Mason, *Records of Colonial Gloucester County*, Volume 1, 87.



Abingdon Parish (white background) and land patents up through 1669. Red circles represent one-and-a-half-mile buffers around the manor houses of the parish's most prominent landholders, as well as Gloucester Town.
Brown, "To the Place Where it Began," 75.

plantation. The first half of this chapter reviews his actions and their effects on the lives of enslaved Africans and the landscape he forced them to create. The second half of the chapter discusses their reaction to this redesign and to Burwell's attempts to enslave both man and nature through the manipulation of the plantation's physical elements and their meanings. Enabled by ambition, wealth and knowledge, and through the control of these laborers, Lewis Burwell II created an environment that

served to legitimize his place in society, at the top of his class and with few peers. To "see" Fairfield Plantation was to experience and understand an idealized Virginia at the end of its first century. A landscape worth emulating, his peers would visit, experience, and emulate Burwell's design (among others) and through their actions redefine the Virginia plantation anew. But their efforts mattered little without the enslaved Africans whose labor made this possible here and at every other major plantation in late seventeenth-century Virginia. They created a contemporary, alternative world, overlapping with Burwell's Fairfield. These white and black landscapes their intersections and their divergences, created the plantation landscape most recognizable by scholars and an essential element to understanding the development of slavery and the colonial plantation.

No one would dispute that Fairfield included more than one building, but past research focused almost exclusively on the manor house to the detriment of the plantation's other buildings, old and new, along with spaces and boundary markers that separated the fields, forests and formal areas, defining a distinct place. Fairfield had a legal boundary and a physical boundary, perhaps even a figurative boundary: "out on the edge of the plantation." The idea that an individual designed this plantation, laid it out using reason and logic, whether to heighten its agricultural productivity, promote a specific visual aesthetic, or maintain the greatest security and efficiency from the laborers, understanding the intent of these actions heightened an individual's experience moving through this landscape. The designer, if there can be one person primarily responsible for the idea of Fairfield plantation, was Lewis Burwell II.

Whether consciously or subconsciously, he intended to establish control over the world around him.

Each fencepost, irrigation ditch, and slave quarter represented a purposeful imposition of Burwell's identity and vision. The fencelines, ditches, or the edges of fields are noticeable for their contrast with what is (or was) around them. The human-built elements of the landscape attract attention and create contrasting spaces that differ from the natural and often from one another. An element may physically limit movement or sight through accessible and inaccessible spaces. The creation of objects of separation, whether the wooden fenceline or its symbol on a map, further substantiates its role within the landscape as others understand its power, its meaning, and its condition. Specifically, understanding its role gives it a degree of legitimacy, of permanence, and, in seeming contradiction, its impermanence and subjectivity, especially when it exists in more than one landscape (e.g. the black landscape). The physical deterioration and necessary maintenance of a fenceline, as one example, can reflect the impermanence of something seen by others, earlier, as strict, rigid, and formal. Over time, it transforms into something that can be moved, modified, and erased. The struggle to control these integral elements of a plantation, where the built and natural environment collide, highlights the tenuous relationship between humans and the environment.

Identifying the transition between house and yard, quarter and garden, road and field, among other intersections, is seldom as easy as locating a ditch or fence line, or reading a map. The limitations of archaeological and historical research force us to see these physical barriers, when they are noted or survive in the ground, as strict and

formal, a concept we embrace today much more firmly than people in the past. In fact, these divisions first developed in this specific environment during the seventeenth century, implemented across the English colonial landscape in its infant stages. Even more challenging is appreciating what these barriers meant within the enslaved Africans' black landscape who may not have felt obliged to respect or read these changes in the same way.

The Fairfield manor house design and construction marks one of many changes to the greater landscape of Fairfield Plantation. At the end of the seventeenth century, Lewis Burwell II put into action a plan that went far beyond the necessary maintenance of older buildings or integration of new agricultural technologies. The result was a space wholly unique to Virginia, employing design principles, personal knowledge, and peer-influenced ideas that reshaped his parent's plantation. Without a diary or letters describing intent, the landscape is the sole means for understanding how and why this plantation design came to be. There is no evidence that Lewis or Abigail traveled beyond Virginia during their adulthood and there is no inventory of Burwell's library or evidence that inspiration came from early architectural treatises.²⁷³ But how else would they have come up with a design? It is highly likely that the buildings and landscapes of England, Europe, and perhaps the Caribbean, came to them through discussions with, and the actions of, others more familiar with those worlds. Whether craftsmen, peers among the merchant-planter elite, the local clergy,

²⁷³ There are frustratingly few inventories of personal libraries in Virginia from the end of the seventeenth century or the beginning of the eighteenth century. See Helen Park, *A List of Architectural Books Available in America Before the Revolution* (Los Angeles, CA, 1973). Those we know of include a range of books that cover many subjects and reflect both a sense of what was most popular at that time as well as what the owner thought most interesting.

or perhaps the enslaved Africans tasked to build much of the plantation's new design, the ideas that resulted in Fairfield Plantation's design likely came from other people.²⁷⁴

It is tantalizing to look to the rare, but potentially accessible architectural treatises of the late seventeenth century as a major source of instruction for design.²⁷⁵ But there is little evidence to warrant giving them primacy among the forms of influence over design. Carl Lounsbury convincingly writes against the primacy of English architectural precedent through architectural publications of the period, stating that elite merchant planters rather saw design books as "inspirations for improvisation."²⁷⁶ More important to consider, perhaps, was possessing these and other scholarly works as part of the landscape under creation.²⁷⁷

²⁷⁴ According to Carl Lounsbury, talking specifically about buildings, "To ignore the instrumental role played by workmen in the design process, no matter how difficult to document, is to misunderstand the nature of architectural change." Lounsbury, "The Design Process," 67.

²⁷⁵ Lewis Burwell II's friend and younger contemporary, William Byrd II, possessed over 2600 volumes and owned copies of ten architectural books, all published before 1730, a handful specifically before 1700. These include Ferrerio's *Palazzi di Roma* (1655), Leybourn's *The Mirror of Architecture or the Ground Rules of the Art of Building* (1669), Moxon's *Practical Perspective* (1670), and Richards' *The First Book of Architecture by Andrea Palladio* (1663). They illustrate a world of complex geometric shapes, overtures to classical origins, and inclusion of both the foreign and the local environments. See Kevin J. Hayes, ed., *The Library of William Byrd of Westover* (Madison, 1997); Helen Park, *A List of Architectural Books Available in America Before the Revolution* (Los Angeles, CA, 1973): 10-11; Edwin Wolf II, "The Dispersal of the Library of William Byrd of Westover" in *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* LXVIII (1959): 19-106. See also, John Spencer Bassett, ed., *The Writings of Colonel William Byrd of Westover in Virginia, Esqr.* (New York, 1970): Appendix A.

²⁷⁶ According to Carl Lounsbury, "Historians since Kimball have exhausted these books hunting down precedents for various Chesapeake buildings and their details - to little avail." Lounsbury, "The Design Process," 82, quote 83; See also, for example, Calder Loth, "Palladio in Southside Virginia: Brandon and Battersea" in *Building by the Book I*, edited by Mario di Valmarana (Charlottesville, 1984): 25-46; William Rasmussen, "Palladio in Tidewater Virginia: Mount Airy and Blandfield," in *Building by the Book I*, edited by Mario di Valmarana (Charlottesville, 1984): 75-109.

²⁷⁷ No account of Lewis Burwell II's library exists. Few would debate whether he owned books, the greater interest being what subjects he preferred and the size of his collection. His son, James, possessed a library in 1716, borrowed from Godfrey Pole, which included over 115 volumes and contained copies of *My Lord Coke's Institutes*, *Virginit in Usum Delphini* and *Gentleman's Recreation*. See no author, "Miscellaneous Colonial Documents," in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 17 (1909), 2: 147-160; Louis Booker Wright, *The First Gentlemen of Virginia: Intellectual Qualities of the Early Colonial Ruling Class* (Charlottesville, 1970): 118. The collection served as a lending library, the initials or names of prominent planters written beside many of the book titles. The library demonstrates the connections between these books and the men (and women) who borrowed them, read them, and likely discussed them, sharing ideas and critiques. Without his own library, his

The ideas communicated in these books were more than the angles of a tree-lined path, the proper use of symmetry, or the appropriate arrangement of terraces, topiaries, and telescoping vistas. They proved these landscapes existed, or could exist, and they provided a sense for the time, energy, and vision it would take to create them. They were neither maps nor instruction manuals, in any formal sense.²⁷⁸ They did not discuss how construction required massive human effort, intense attention to detail, and the will to see through a plan that would take years to complete and still longer to appreciate. This emerged through Lewis Burwell II's own ambition and the instruction he received through his experiences on his peers' plantations and through the craftsmen he hired, each of which likely had greater experience and instruction in the latest architectural fashions and the English interpretation of Renaissance classicism that served as the model for new design, including the manor house at Fairfield.²⁷⁹

Lewis Burwell II was not alone in remaking his world. Throughout the seventeenth century, the colony's elite visited the plantations of their peers, walking through their friend's gardens, dining at their homes, and experiencing the acreage around their manor houses as they discussed different topics, including the construction and maintenance of these landscapes. This social interaction bred

father's collection likely remaining at Fairfield with Nathaniel, Pole's books became surrogate symbols for James' intellect and sophistication.

²⁷⁸ Lounsbury adds that architectural treatises of the day "provided little in the way of practical advice about building methods or useful information about building design," and "rarely did owners mine these treatises as guides for building." Rather, they were "simply one part of the curriculum of a gentleman's classical education." There were technical treatises published at that time, though, which reached a broader audience and likely introduced some craftsmen in the classical orders, "explicated the grammar of classical design, and provided useful information on mensuration." Lounsbury, "The Design Process," 81.

²⁷⁹ Lounsbury adds, "Skilled contractors, carpenters, joiners, carvers, and bricklayers grasped its fundamental rules and details and translated this knowledge into building practices that matched their clients' needs and ambitions." Lounsbury, "The Design Process," 79, quote 85.

emulation, innovation, and perhaps a cycle of competition, the plantation reflecting the ambitions and ideals of its owner and their families, inspiring friends and visitors to redefine their own landscapes with the hope of impressing others while furthering their economic and social priorities.

Improvements would be made to demonstrate knowledge of new styles, skilled execution of complex designs, or to highlight the inadequacy of a rival's immaturely constructed residence. But the extent of these changes grew exponentially during this period as the realm of possibilities matched the profits of the elite, the labor force they controlled, and the escalating competition they used to further bond their increasingly exclusive group together. It became one of a handful of new ways that the elite separated themselves from the rest of society. What began as a gradual expansion of the plantation's formal and administrative center, with avenues of trees and small formal gardens, would eventually translate into an early-to-mid-eighteenth-century building boom that included campaigns to construct massive brick structures, large and intricately designed formal gardens, extensive road networks, villages of slave quarters, and complex networks of agricultural fields, all within plans that integrated cosmopolitan ideas and acknowledged the growing influence of classical design through a purposeful and sophisticated arrangement of elements in a topographic setting.

Plantation landscapes at the end of the seventeenth century clearly evolved into something bigger and different than their predecessors. Many factors were at play, including the labor, storage, and logistical needs of producing new crops augmenting tobacco, and the changing labor force which focused increasingly on enslaved

Africans, but also included craftsmen from England who brought with them ideas and skills that reflected trends in English architecture and society. The first glimpses of these new landscapes coincided with an increased political and economic investment in towns, masonry architecture, and the development of public buildings. As the colony underwent significant economic, political, and social changes, so did the look and meaning of elite merchant-planters' plantations.

While balancing their economic and agricultural needs with their societal and personal wants, the elite developed the means to exhibit their position, solidify their influence, and maintain persistent pressure on their peers. One of their primary goals substantiate their claim as the rightful leaders of the colony. The essential factor that arguably drove them to demonstrate this claim through competitive excess, though, was not their peer group. Rather, it was a series of Englishmen sent to "control" these Chesapeake planters. More accurately, it was a succession of Virginia Governors who, one after another, tried and failed to control the colony's merchant-planter elite from the time of Bacon's Rebellion through the end of Lewis Burwell II's life.

Seven men held the position of resident Governor or Lieutenant Governor during this period (1676-1710). Each put his own stamp on his administration of the colony and each had a different relationship with the merchant-planter elite. Some attempted to ignore the power and influence wielded by the wealthiest echelon of colonial society while others maneuvered to divide and conquer the group, using the Governor's office to cultivate loyalties through the select assignment of powerful and lucrative political positions. But none was as influential or as antagonizing, or lasted

as long, as Francis Nicholson. Nicholson served as Lieutenant Governor of Virginia from 1690 to 1692 and as Governor from 1698 until his recall in 1705. His was the longest tenure of any governor of this period and this was the longest of any of his appointments in any of the colonies, including stints as the Governor of Maryland and as a political appointee in New York and Boston.

Nicholson's tenure in Virginia started off well and his accomplishments are noteworthy. He is credited with designing two of the most important urban landscapes in the Chesapeake: Annapolis (1695) and, later, Williamsburg (circa 1699).²⁸⁰ In both cases he incorporated Baroque design principles in the creation of a formal landscape. The intentional placement of public and ecclesiastic buildings at specific locations along the towns' axes created a visual hierarchy further enhanced by the construction of private residences and businesses that desired close association with these centers of political and religious power. His town models exhibited his sophisticated vision for the colonies and his desire to elevate himself and his position through the demonstration of this knowledge, to the elite merchant-planters who he sought to control. But he also needed their help to create these landscapes. Those he involved in the towns' creation could influence these designs, perhaps creating alternative landscapes within Nicholson's vision.

James Blair, first rector of the College of William and Mary, understood the meaning behind Nicholson's placement of the institution's primary building at one end of Williamsburg's longest axis. It not only visually anchored the urban area, but it

²⁸⁰ In the case of Annapolis, Nicholson, while Governor of Maryland, drew an idealized Baroque city plan with radiating streets emanating from two circles placed overtop of and incorporating, to a degree, the existing colonial town grid. As with the Williamsburg plan, intent did not translate into identical implementation, as each town grew and diverged from the idealized plan.

served as symbolic and architectural counterweight to the legislature, housed in the colony's capitol building at the opposite end of town. The initial designs for these large public buildings, intended from the town's beginning but not constructed in some cases for many years, incorporated colonnades, cupolas, double-hung sash windows, and massive quantities of locally-manufactured brick along with imported stone details.

The early use of symmetry, the substantial quality and expense of using brick and stone, and the appropriate expression of classical design was previously evident on the plantation homes of a handful of gentry. These individuals included John Custis, Robert Carter, Thomas Ludwell, Governor William Berkeley and Philip Ludwell I (with Berkeley's widow, Elizabeth), and Lewis Burwell II. Each of these men, and especially Burwell, played a role in the creation of Williamsburg. They knew how the designed homes and landscapes at their plantations, and the capital they helped build, served as a sophisticated expression of their own identity. By connecting the design elements of public and ecclesiastic buildings with those of their homes, they created a visual connection between the power of the state, the power of institutionalized religion, and their power to control the world around them. Nicholson's plans, influenced by this small group of elite merchant-planters, only heightened this connection by imprinting these principles in the design of the colony's new capital.

Lewis Burwell II and his peers intended their houses and landscapes to symbolize power, and political power in particular. Beyond the common architectural language shared with the county courthouse and the administration buildings at

Jamestown and later Williamsburg, the manor house could, and on occasion did, serve as the colony's center for government. On more than a few occasions, a private manor house and its grounds would literally serve as the capitol, whether because a fire had destroyed the capitol, as it did at Jamestown on September 19, 1676, or because the acting governor chose to convene the Council of State at a member's manor house. Hosting the council and bearing witness to the governance of Virginia imbued these sites with power for others to behold.

The significance of the landscape surrounding the manor houses of elite merchant-planters throughout the colony at the end of the seventeenth century cannot be overstated. In each of the examples listed above, and discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6, the owners controlled the acreage extending out from the house for at least 40 years, the neighboring fields under cultivation for that period or longer. It is likely that this area included a group of frame buildings surrounded by crops of tobacco and food crops, such as corn and wheat, for consumption by the plantation's laborers. Many in the elite possessed the ability to take this canvas and create a new expression of their individual will. They possessed new found wealth and relative financial security that came with their political positions and profits from expanded tobacco production and other investments.²⁸¹

²⁸¹ Local markets were an important source of income and in many years meant the difference between profit and loss. Subsistence production outside the market - the provision of food, shelter, fuel, washing, and other services consumed in the home - was worth as much as export earnings. Over time, householders increased their wealth not from adding to their local or export earnings or from increasing subsistence production but from making farm improvements, adding value to undeveloped land through clearing, fencing, building houses and barns, and planting orchards." Walsh, "Migration, Society, Economy, & Settlement," 56. See also, Michael G. Kammen, ed., "Maryland in 1699: A Letter from the Reverend Hugh Jones," in *Journal of Southern History* 29 (1963): 369-70; George Alsop, "A Character of the Province of Maryland," in *Narratives of Early Maryland, 1633-1684*, edited by Clayton Colman Hall (New York, 1910); Carr et al., *Robert Cole's World*, chap. 4.

By this time, the environment of southeastern Virginia had undergone such significant change, especially with the loss of trees (for fuel and the clearing of land for tobacco), removing many of the visual separators between plantations. Geographic boundaries, though, could not contain the plantation landscapes of the elite. The monopolization of political positions, especially at the parish and county level, established an accepted path for the upwardly mobile and created exclusivity based on the relatively slow turnover rate among a select group of families. It also established the extent of power for these offices, requiring the involvement of people to influence the development of their interests. The donation of land for the construction of a new parish church, and perhaps providing funds to care for the poor, did far more than exhibit philanthropic tendencies. It allowed the elite to influence the placement of the church building in relation to their own plantations, and to potentially exhibit control over this part of colonial life through its visual association with the plantation.

The elite connected these sponsored buildings and their own homes through a common architectural language, demonstrating through these landscape designs that Nicholson was not alone in his understanding of Baroque principles. For instance, by integrating the placement of the church in their landscape design they extended this sense of close and longstanding association between the power of the elite and the power of the church.²⁸² Nicholson placed his Governor's Palace between the dual powers of knowledge (The College of William and Mary) and politics (The Capitol). Years before him, Lewis Burwell II symbolically and physically connected his home with the parish church, his closest physical parallel, connecting them with a straight

²⁸² Upton, *Holy Things and Profane*.



Abingdon Parish Church communion silver.
The Fairfield Foundation, White Marsh, Virginia.

path. Perhaps the only conflict that would stunt this intended design would be competition for this honor from an elite neighbor; with the labor available to them, these elite merchant-planters certainly would not let Mother Nature, specifically significant swampland in the case of Fairfield plantation, get in their way.

The Abingdon Parish vestry book no longer exists, but local tradition and objects in the church collections speak to Lewis Burwell II's involvement as an active member. It is likely he served on the vestry, and attended church regularly, as his family is mentioned frequently in the parish registry with baptisms and births for sons

and daughters.²⁸³ He did not donate the land for his parish church; that honor fell to his father's contemporary, Augustine Warner I of Warner Hall. The Warner family's land bounded Fairfield to the east and the church land is situated immediately between the two plantations. Lewis Burwell II did provide the parish silver in 1702, though, and may have just as likely chosen the same spot for the church should he have had the choice.²⁸⁴ He would ultimately connect his plantation visually with the church and its surroundings via a tree-lined avenue that led directly from his front door to the front door of the church, without turn.

A second road entered the plantation from the north, intersecting with the church road just east of the main house. This northern road provided direct access to Burwell's mill and pond. A focal point for the community, the mill not only processed the grains produced across the plantation, but also accommodated crops from neighboring farms and smaller planters nearby, producing an alternative hub for community interaction beyond the manor house complex. Both roads appear on a French map drawn in 1781. While the manor house received no designation on this map, the cartographer clearly labeled the mill. The age of each road is uncertain, but archaeological evidence and the relative position to seventeenth-century features within the plantation landscape suggests both roads date to the early period of the plantation.

The east road was likely the primary land-based entry for visitors to the plantation. It connected the manor house and plantation with "the great road" that

²⁸³ Robins, *The Register of Abingdon Parish*.

²⁸⁴ The flagon and a large paten were restored from photograph after damage in the Rosewell fire (1916). See Caroline Baytop Sinclair, *Gloucester's Past in Pictures* (Virginia Beach, 1991): 140. Tradition has it that the Burwells shared the north gallery with their neighbors across Carter Creek, the Pages of Rosewell. See Henry Irving Brock, *Colonial Churches in Virginia* (Richmond, 1930): 72.



Frenchman's Map, 1781.
Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

bisected the county from Gloucester Point to King and Queen County and points further north and west. A major travel, trade, and communication route, the section of road in Abingdon Parish followed a topographic anomaly, and was initially created by Virginia Indians and frequently noted in early land patents in Gloucester County. It continued, albeit in a modified form, throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and today matches the path of U.S. Rt. 17. During Lewis Burwell II's lifetime sufficient traffic existed to spur the development of taverns and interior plantations that relied on the road and travelers for business. A direct link to this road meant efficient land-based access for people and goods to and from Fairfield plantation.²⁸⁵

Both roads persisted into the nineteenth century, and perhaps into the early twentieth, although only a portion of the east road remains in use. While their

²⁸⁵ An asteroid impacted the earth close to the center of what is now the Chesapeake Bay about 35 million years ago, creating the ridge line. For a discussion of the road's origins and influence on the development of the region, see Brown, *To the Place Where it Began*.

purposes are clear, the order of their development is not. The mill road was perhaps the earlier of the two. Its path is known through the map discussed above, as well as the road cuts surviving in the ravines north of the manor house.²⁸⁶ This overland connection between the Burwell plantation, the mill, a complex of smaller settled parcels, and the plantations to the west across Carter Creek, would have been popular throughout the second half of the seventeenth century and throughout the eighteenth century. Its extension to the south, beyond the manor house, suggests a close relationship with three other landscape elements known to predate the manor house. These include the earlier Burwell building complex a short distance to the east, the Burwell cemetery, whose earliest headstone marks the grave of Lewis Burwell I (1653), and the deepest water for heavily laden flat-bottomed boats traveling up Carter Creek.²⁸⁷ Over time, the east road grew to prominence and likely received the majority of traffic in and out of the plantation as it connected not only with the church and the county's major thoroughfare, but also with Lewis Burwell II's expansion of his property.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁶ An aerial photograph also shows differential moisture retention in a linear pattern, a result of the compacted road surface surviving partially intact beneath the plowed field (Figure 25). The dark stain appears to connect the road cuts in the distant forest with the front of the house. See also the discussion of roads in Chapter 2, specifically their proximity to a mill dam in place near the present day mill pond as early as 1680 and the subdivision of an earlier patent by Stephen Gill indicating a road in the vicinity of the mill dam as early as 1651. See YCDOW 1 (1633-1657): 135.

²⁸⁷ Oral history with the Carters, an African-American family with longstanding ties to the area and who ran the post-Civil War mill complex at Burwell's (now Hayes') Mill Pond, includes reference to the construction of small boats in the third floor of the mill, and rowing them from the mill to the lighthouse in the York River just beyond the mouth of Carter Creek. While twentieth-century agriculture contributed significantly to the silting of the creek, Burwell's construction of the mill dam, likely overtop of an early beaver dam, was most influential in creating the environment seen today.

²⁸⁸ The degree to which these roads may have operated as segregated spaces is a point of future research. Whether Lewis Burwell II chose to embellish them differently, or mandate travel along them in any regulated fashion, is unknown. Contemporary examples include the tree-lined avenues of William Byrd II's plantation, Westover (c. 1701), illustrated in Therese O'Malley, *Keywords in American Landscape Design* (New Haven, 2010): 103.

Lewis Burwell II chose not to move his plantation from his parents' property. He did not build his design on an undeveloped landscape of forest, pasture, and virgin soil. Reconciling the past with the present, he built his new manor house in the long-worked fields adjacent to his childhood home. The complex of buildings that sustained him, his father, his mother, her second and third husbands, and their children through much of the seventeenth century remained intact and a part of his new design. It persisted for the enslaved Africans as well. Burwell's expanding family, representing all ages of youth, influenced his desire for adequate living and entertaining space, already with nine children in his household. How he incorporated these still functioning and productive buildings from his past into this new vision for the future is not entirely clear. At least one of the buildings, presumably his parent's house, persisted into the early eighteenth century, before a future generation of Burwells broke the connection with the past and tore the older house down.²⁸⁹

The mill and church roads, assuming they existed before 1694, influenced Lewis Burwell II's placement and orientation of his new manor house. These roads converged on straight lines to form a rough 45 degree angle, part of a series of spokes-in-the-wheel, a visual arrangement that incorporated stream beds, the creek, and extensions of the road to the south, placing the manor house at the center of a small plantation universe. The mill road in particular is nearly perfectly oriented with the manor house and other elements of the new plantation design. Hardly a coincidence,

²⁸⁹ One of the great unsolved mysteries of the Fairfield archaeological site is the location of the earlier manor house. Its approximate location is known based on previous excavations undertaken, but never documented, by James Blair in 1964 and 1965. Several field projects intended to solve this mystery have proven unsuccessful in revealing the structure's footprint, while very successful in introducing new evidence related to other questions for other periods, while providing sufficient circumstantial evidence for our continued belief that the earlier manor house is nearby. See Mark Maloy, "Searching for the Seventeenth Century Fairfield" in *Quarterly Bulletin of the Archeological Society of Virginia* 63 (2007) 3: 130-135.

Burwell chose to orient his house to create an experience for those entering into, or existing within, the plantation. While his inspiration for the design remains a mystery, it likely emerged from the continued discussions with craftsmen, peers, and recent travelers to England²⁹⁰

A visual trick played with converging sight lines, the roads created specific vistas intentionally designed for viewing from along these paths. For example, as the road extends northward away from the manor house it appears to slowly angle inward, mimicking the general direction of Carter Creek to the west. The two features merging together, the northern vista, likely devoid of trees or incorporating only select examples, would not only lead towards one of the major economic and agricultural elements of the landscape (the mill), but would also serve as visual guides to the natural world that Burwell controlled.

The church road may be contemporary with the manor house or predate it as well. The road bed is confirmed by the same aerial indicators as the mill road, from nineteenth- and twentieth-century maps, and from the portion of the road that survives today (Fairfield Lane). Extending the road beyond its modern termination at Cedar Bush road, the path would lead a traveler directly to "the Greate Road" and the front steps of the seventeenth-century Abingdon parish church.²⁹¹ Both roads guided visitors

²⁹⁰ Contemporary designs implemented in a grand scale in England include the "Plan of the Garden and Plantations of Houghton in Norfolk the Seat of the Right Honourable Robert Walpole Esqr. Chancellor of Eng. and First Lord Comr. of his Majesty's Treasury" and the "Plan of the Garden and Plantation of Clare Mont in Surry, the Seat of his Grace the Duke of New Castle." Both designs were included in Colen Campbell's *Vitruvius Britannicus* (1725) and mark the popularity of this Palladian-British style visible in the works of Jones, Webb, Wren and Vanbrugh. These landscapes may have been experienced, or perhaps worked on, by craftsmen employed by Burwell or possibly witnessed by one of Burwell's peers. See also Park, *A List of Architectural Books*, x, 2-3.

²⁹¹ David A. Brown and Thane H. Harpole, "...the best church I have seen in the country" *Archaeological Excavations at Abingdon Parish Church, Gloucester County, Virginia*, manuscript on file with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, Virginia, 2004.

down specific paths that limited their perspectives and controlled their experience.

The expectations of travelers, whether they ventured out towards the mill or church or ventured inward toward the manor house, grew as they neared their destination, but one building need not be visible from the other. Travelers understood where they were going. Their journey towards the Fairfield manor house was an essential element of Burwell's design. The two roads, as essential elements of his designed landscape, visually connected him with the pillars of economic, agricultural, social, and religious importance in the colony.²⁹²

The visitor experienced the sheer enormity of the plantation landscape as they cut through it, the road bordered by fences on either side, an unnaturally straight line through the massive surrounding fields and forests. The manor house appeared in the distance and slowly grew larger as one neared. The sounds of the busy work yard, the bustle of enslaved laborers, and the skyscraping chimney stacks grew louder, dustier, and taller as they came closer, building to a sensory crescendo as the visitors reached the intersection of the two roads and took the final approach a few hundred feet towards the manor house. Later iterations of the landscape incorporated quarters and agricultural buildings along the entry roads, further heightening this experience, telling a story to visitors experiencing the plantation for the first time, while confirming this narrative to those who lived within it. But Lewis Burwell II's plantation concentrated the human population around the manor house and in distant quarters. His approach

²⁹² A more complicated element of this landscape is Carter Creek. As a "spoke-in-the-wheel," it serves in a similar capacity to the two roads and might even be seen as two spokes, the fulcrum of the plantation existing at the manor house. But research continues to examine the relationship between Lewis Burwell II and the creek, any attempts to control or modify it, and how the approach from the York River, through Carter Bay, and up to the house would be experienced differently than the land-based travel routes.



Interpretation of the mid-eighteenth-century landscape near the Fairfield manor house.
 This includes remnants of the earlier landscape of Lewis Burwell II.
 The Fairfield Foundation, White Marsh, Virginia.

focused as much on the control of the natural physical surroundings as it did on the display of wealth through the ownership of people.

According to Lewis Burwell II's plan, the anticipation building from the approach to the house culminated in the plantation's forecourt. A fence line, connecting with the northwest corner of the house, extended north, perpendicular to the building façade, towards and perhaps into the ravine where a spring provided fresh water. It created one edge of a formal space, incorporating the natural topography to the north and the built landscape (the house's façade/north elevation). The result: a confined space that accentuated the height of the manor house by forcing perspective -

intimidating and impressing visitors waiting for entry. The forced perspective highlighted the building's verticality through the dual triple-set, diagonally-placed chimney stacks that framed the façade, the double set appearing to pierce the center of the building's roofline.

This is not to say that the vision conceived for the forecourt ended at the edge of the gully. Whether originally a steep decline, or a more gradual one as is seen today, the forecourt may have extended beyond the gully and springhead. The nearly perfect orientation of the "mill" road with that of the manor house suggests it may have also served to frame the forecourt, indicating that beyond the gully are additional elements that he intended as part of the plantation design.

Lewis Burwell II's plantation design suggests that he believed his influence and control extended beyond his sight lines. He conceived of his world as massive and monumental, from the number of acres under plow to the number of bricks in his manor house. Experiencing this landscape redefined "big." Perhaps not as ornate or as complex as the designed landscapes increasingly popular in England and continental Europe, within the context of the colonial Chesapeake this landscape produced an intense sense of awe and wonder.

The placement of the manor house, the arrangement of roads, and the "vision" of Lewis Burwell II permanently altered the landscape. Incorporating old and new elements within his design, some gradually, others immediately, his design responded to each in different ways. The house and forecourt coincided with the head of the gully, the roads to the church and mill intersecting just to the east. The extension of the mill road, along with the earlier buildings and cemetery, effectively separated

twenty acres of flat, arable land to the west and south of the manor house, enough space to incorporate an extensive garden, work buildings, work spaces and perhaps a small agricultural field and orchard. His design purposely divided the acreage immediately surrounding the manor house.

This division purposely hindered movement and created segregated spaces, a process repeated inside the manor house. The ravines and waterways to the north, west, and south, and the manor house, forecourt, and mill road extension to the east, formed the border for the plantation's new formal and administrative center. The placement of fence lines, ditches, and buildings further subdivided this area into subspaces. A combination of functional and aesthetic considerations, such as fencing the garden to protect against rodents, influenced this design. It also allowed Burwell to isolate enslaved Africans and their work areas and living quarters to one area, allowing for easier surveillance. An architectural hierarchy, with the manor house at its top (and center) and smaller, less sophisticated and less valuable buildings radiating out from it, this design not only reiterated Burwell's vision for the plantation, but further legitimized his place within it and his treatment of the people under his control. Just as the buildings, work areas, and entertainment spaces became increasingly associated with specific individuals and classes of people, their maintenance and emulation by others affirmed their identity.

Burwell's landscape decisions follow precedent employed in towns and estates in England and Europe and constructed on a precious few places across the Chesapeake. St. Mary's City, the contemporary capital in Maryland, perhaps signified

the best studied example.²⁹³ The radial arrangement of buildings, roads, fence lines, and other landscape features created vistas, controlled movement, and resulted in experiences that highlighted the identity of the designer. These designs did not typically incorporate spaces specifically for enslaved laborers, but they did establish a visual hierarchy that exhibited power and control over mankind and the environment. To that end, it is possible to see an adaptation of philosophical movements flourishing in England at that time reflected in the elite merchant-planter's attempts to marry their knowledge of the Virginia environment, their aspirations towards controlling their surroundings and their expanding enslaved labor force, and desire to exhibit their knowledge of sophisticated English designs.

Landscape architectural historian M. Kent Brinkley posits that one of the important theorists of the seventeenth century in England was the German apostle of Protestant pansophism, Samuel Hartlib (d. 1662). The philosophy "urged that perfection was attainable in this world and could be achieved by the free and universal sharing of every scientific advance between nations." Hartlib's co-authored work with agricultural authority Cressy Dymock, entitled *A Discoverie for Division or Setting Out of Land as to the best Form* (1653) was embraced by the upper classes in England and influenced the designs of their estates. His philosophies were potentially imported to Virginia by Governor William Berkeley who helped push forward a concerted effort towards agricultural and architectural innovation. Hartlib's ideal landscape, as

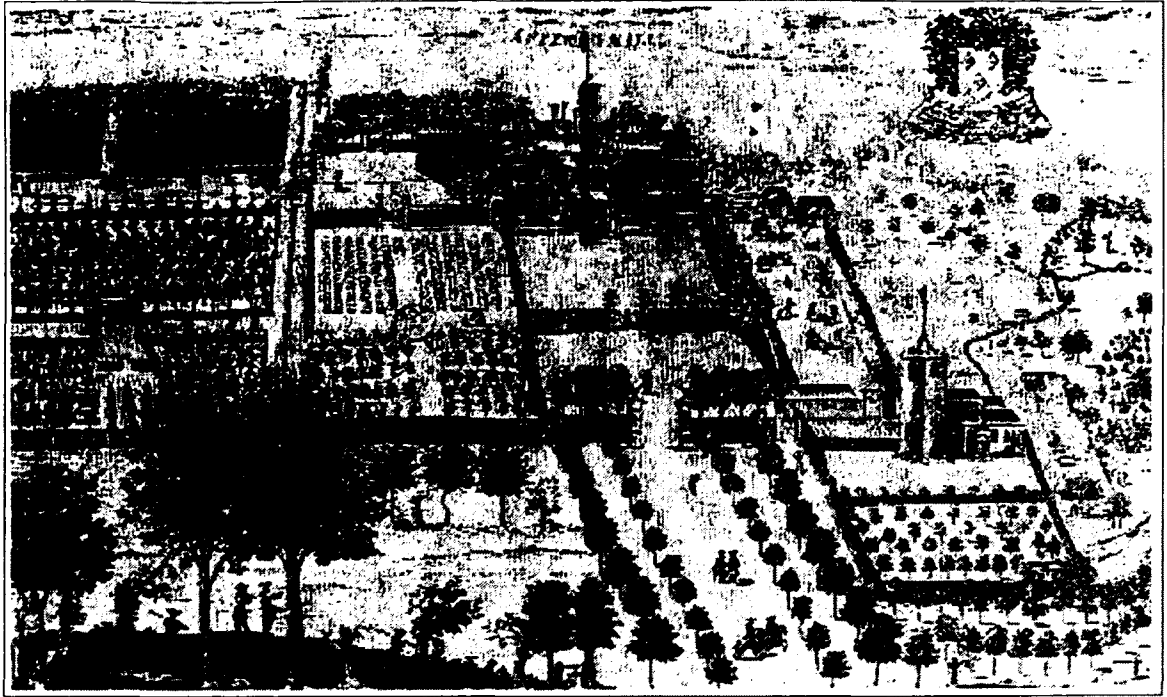
²⁹³ Henry M. Miller, "Baroque Cities in the Wilderness: Archaeology and Urban Development in the Colonial Chesapeake" in *Historic Archaeology* 22 (1988): 57-73; Henry M. Miller, "Archaeology and Town Planning in Early British America" in *Old Worlds and New Worlds: Historical/Post Medieval Archaeology Papers*, edited by Geoff Egan and R.L. Michael. (Oxford, 1999), 72-83; James D. Kornwolf, *Architecture and Town Planning in Colonial North America*, two volumes (Baltimore, 2002).

adapted by Berkeley, included a centrally placed manor house, efficient layout of support buildings, operating as "both the spiritual and physical center of the complex."²⁹⁴

While Brinkley warns that Hartlib's abstract view of estate development may be seen as overly ambitious for a colonial enterprise in the New World, he concedes that "the general, organizational theory seems to have been followed in the overall design of at least the larger Virginia plantations from a fairly early date (that is, by the third quarter of the seventeenth century)." Others contributing to this movement included Gervase Markham who encouraged through his *Farewell to Husbandry* (1631) the design of English estates with a series of geometric, rectangular enclosures. Images of the early landscapes, including Balls Park and Aspenden Hall in Hertfordshire, from the 1630s and 1640s, confirmed a shared vision of the ideal manor, its farm, and its gardens as a complete, self-supporting world of their own.²⁹⁵ Lewis Burwell II may have shared in this vision as well, incorporating this Hartlibian philosophy in his plantation and in his work with other designs, particularly in Williamsburg. At the very least, his designs reflect the popularity of this practice, if not the principals behind it. Continued discussion of the same concepts behind

²⁹⁴ M. Kent Brinkley, *The Green Spring Plantation Greenhouse/Orangery And the Probable Evolution of the Domestic Area Landscape* (Colonial National Historic Park, 2003): 44-45; Tim Mowl, *Gentlemen & Players: Gardeners of the English Landscape* (Stroud, 2000): 12; Samuel Hartlib and Cressy Dymock, *A Discoverie for Division or Setting Out of Land as to the Best Form* (London: printed for Richard Wodenothe, 1653).

²⁹⁵ Gervase Markham, *Markham's Farewell to Husbandry, or The Enriching of All Sorts of Barren and Sterile Grounds in our Kingdome: To be as Fruitfull in All Manner of Graine, Pulse, and Grasse as the Best Grounds Whatsoever: Together with the Annoyances and Persuasion of all Graine and Seede from One Yeare to Many Yeares: As also a Husbandly Computation of Men and Cattels Dayly Labours, Their Expences, Charges, and Utmost Profits* (London, 1631); Tim Mowl, *Gentlemen & Players: Gardeners of the English Landscape* (Stroud, 2000): 20-21; M. Kent Brinkley, *The Green Spring Plantation Greenhouse/Orangery And the Probable Evolution of the Domestic Area Landscape* (Colonial National Historic Park, 2003): 46-47.



Layout of grounds at Aspenden Hall, Hertfordshire, c. 1650.
Brinkley, *The Green Spring Plantation Greenhouse/Orangery*, 45.

interconnecting, reinforcing symbols created through landscape modification, influenced his landscape design at Fairfield plantation.

The colony's elite could not develop these landscapes on their own, though. The preference for sequestering power and controlling the surrounding world was not new, but the ways in which they expressed these desires and made them realities was. The confluence of these preferences and the developments in labor and agriculture helped make the designed landscapes of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries an essential method for projecting the identity of the elite. Understood as both functional and aesthetic components of a plantation landscape, these landscape designs connected the manor house with the world outside Fairfield plantation's formal and administrative center, effectively extending the symbolic world into a situation of overlap where influence was not independent, but in many ways dependent on one

another. Manor houses served as both private residences and public buildings, Virginia's elite merchant-planters envisioning their worlds extending to control spaces, people, and activities beyond their bounds in a physical and symbolic way for generations to come. The long-lasting effects, though, were felt as much by their enslaved African laborers as the elite's descendents.

Armed with established credit lines and trans-Atlantic trade connections, and fueled by a sense of competition among their peer group, the merchant-planter elite invested heavily in the increasingly accessible and very necessary labor of enslaved Africans at the end of the seventeenth century. The enslaved workforce served as lynch pin to the entire plantation design. Without a significant increase in the number of laborers, and a change in the relationship between property owner and laborer, the plantation designs of the late seventeenth century would not have emerged. The rise in the number of bondspeople at an elite plantation allowed Lewis Burwell II to dedicate groups of enslaved Africans to non-agricultural tasks for portions of, and possibly entire, seasons. This surplus labor made possible the tree lined avenues connecting the manor house to the parish church, the excavation of clay for hundreds of thousands of bricks and the timbering of large swaths of forest for lumber and for the resulting vista. At the same time, the new plantation designs represented a reaction to the changing labor conditions, a response to the increasing need for control over man and nature within a world more black than white. Together, the white plantation owner, through his aspirations, and the black enslaved African, as compelled by their master but not without imprinting their own identity on the

landscape, redefined the world of the manor house within the surrounding, expanding plantation.

Lewis Burwell II joined his peers, and perhaps was among the leaders, to fully embrace the shift from indentured servants to enslaved-workers. He expanded his labor force through inheritance, by encouraging births and acquiring additional slaves from traders who docked on Carter Creek.²⁹⁶ His father likely purchased enslaved Africans and their numbers undoubtedly grew during William Bernard and Philip Ludwell I's management of the property. As with other plantations nearby, indentured servants likely made up a portion of Burwell's workforce at Fairfield, but their numbers declined during the second half of the seventeenth century, replaced by enslaved Africans. By the end of his life (1710) Lewis Burwell II owned at least 89 slaves and, by the end of the 18th century, the family's workforce in Gloucester County alone included 168 enslaved Africans and African-Americans spread across their 7000 acres in Abingdon Parish, the largest combination of landholdings and bondspeople in the county.²⁹⁷

The legal definitions of race and the status of slaves changed dramatically during the seventeenth century, partly to accommodate the needs of the elite planters and their increasing reliance on enslaved laborers. The social separation between slave and master, already a significant chasm, grew wider after Nathaniel Bacon's rebellion and the Westmoreland Slave Plot of 1687, among other events that,

²⁹⁶ Mason, *Records of Colonial Gloucester County*, Volume I, 15; Robert Reade Thruston Papers, Filson Historical Society, Louisville, Kentucky; Robins, *The Register of Abingdon Parish*; Walsh, *From Calabar to Carter's Grove*.

²⁹⁷ Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 21, n33; Lorena S. Walsh, "A Place in Time' Regained: A Fuller History of Colonial Chesapeake Slavery Through Group Biography" in Larry E. Hudson, ed., *Working Toward Freedom: Slave Society and Domestic Economy in the American South* (Rochester, NY, 1994): 5. See also, Mason, *Records of Colonial Gloucester County*, Volume I, 92.

intentionally or not, connected the ideas of violence and uncertainty with the poor, lower classes and particularly Africans.²⁹⁸ One result was the hardening of class structure and the further decline in opportunities for upward mobility. Another result was what historical archaeologist Terrence Epperson refers to as, "the formulation and implementation of "whiteness" in Virginia." Through the construction of racial difference, in law but also in Anglican theology and empiricist epistemology, among other areas of colonial culture, the elite merchant planters framed the world through their words. In similar ways, the changes in the physical world divided the plantation's population and embodied these cultural divisions.²⁹⁹

Lewis Burwell II considered the population of servants and enslaved Africans at Fairfield an integral element of the plantation and essential to maintaining a profitable enterprise. But their role in this agricultural endeavor, in Byrd's plantation "machine," classified them as moving parts in a landscape, increasingly seen as objects (property), rather than humans operating tools and completing tasks. Their presence necessitated investment in infrastructure, such as buildings and spaces to sleep, eat, and spend time when not working in the field or elsewhere. And while a percentage of the workforce lived in distant quarters, farming fields or working at the mill, many lived close to the manor house, daily confronting the property owner with their humanity.

The manor house served as focal point for the plantation, surrounded by "Kitchens, Dayry houses, Barns, Stables, Store houses, and some of them 2 or 3 Negro

²⁹⁸ Walter C. Rucker, *The River Flows on: Black Resistance, Culture, And Identity Formation in Early America* (Baton Rouge, 2006): 130.

²⁹⁹ Terrence Epperson, "'A Separate House for the Christian Slaves, One for the Negro Slaves': The Archaeology of Race and Identity in Late Seventeenth-Century Virginia" in *Race and the Archaeology of Identity*, edited by Charles E. Orser (Salt Lake City, 2001): 55, 70.

Quarters all Separate from Each other but near the mansion houses...Like little villages.”³⁰⁰ The spaces assigned to the enslaved Africans corresponded to their tasks, their skills, and their longevity at the plantation. This human property connected each building, each activity, and each space to one another as much as any other factor, changing the meaning of this landscape by their very presence. Together with the purposely placed structures of the "little village" they signified the “sprawling domains of Virginia gentlemen...fashioned as declarations of the owners’ status” through “calculated proportion and rigidly controlled symmetry.” The manor house sat omnipotent atop the plantation complex to provoke a strong sense of dominance and submission, balanced with subordinated elements that “intensif[ied] the ideal of the great house...as a self-sufficient rural community.”³⁰¹ But it was only part of the plantation's formal and administrative center.

The formal garden was second only to the manor house in its prominence within a sophisticated plantation design. On May 4, 1709, William Byrd visited Nathaniel Burwell at Fairfield and “walked in the garden about an hour.”³⁰² Sadly, this is the only documentary evidence that refers to a garden of any sort at the plantation across its entire history. Beyond a handful of references to roads and farm buildings, archaeological remains are the only extant source of information on this and many other elements of Fairfield. Its noteworthy inclusion in his diary, along with the length of time Byrd spent there, reveals a general sense for the garden's size and complexity. It was a product of Lewis Burwell II's design, and Nathaniel's retention,

³⁰⁰ William Hugh Grove, "Virginia in 1732: The Travel Journal of William Hugh Grove," edited by Gregory A. Stiverson and Patrick H. Butler III, *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 85 (1977): 26.

³⁰¹ Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia*, 35-36, 37-38.

³⁰² Wright and Tinling, *The Secret Diary of William Byrd*.

as the transition from father to son took place only a few years before as the elder moved with his family across the York River to Kings Creek plantation.

Recent excavations at Fairfield plantation revealed the remains of a large, 164-foot wide and more than 328-foot long formal garden, possibly the same one that Byrd walked through with his host, but more likely a later iteration. Oriented on the long axis of the house, it was situated directly between the manor house and the approach of Carter Creek. Lewis Burwell II's garden, whether the one described above or a different arrangement yet to be discovered, enclosed some of the plantation's most rare and valuable commodities. Typically divided into three parts, including space for an orchard, a vegetable and spice garden, and flower beds, the designed space was intended for others to see and appreciate. The benefits of shipping seeds and clippings from relatively rare and expensive flowers, herbs, and vegetables outweighed the risks inherent in their transport across the Atlantic Ocean or the possibility that they would not grow in the Chesapeake Bay environment.

A multi-sensory experience that transported the visitor to a different world, the formal garden demonstrated the efforts of humans to control nature in both the white and the black plantation landscapes. The enslaved African workforce, likely during this period and definitely by the mid-eighteenth century, maintained these formal spaces, protected the valuable showpieces of elite society, and employed their own knowledge for the care and treatment of these plants to the benefit of their owner. It demonstrated an attempt to control nature (and mankind) seen in the carefully designed rows and meticulously pruned plants that might match a memory of gardens in Europe or Africa, or in a bookplate from a novel in Burwell's library or lent by a

friend. As with the courtyard, Lewis Burwell II designed this space to intentionally confine visitors and create an experience. The garden's sophisticated design, expensive construction costs and the skills needed to maintain it, in the eyes of Burwell's peers at the very least, confirmed the status of the owner. Again, as with the courtyard, the garden was a symbolic intersection of multiple landscapes, marking the contrast between the natural and human-made elements of the plantation. It was a point of access, transition, and an intentionally manipulated stage from which the theatre of life played out.

The need for housing enslaved Africans working near the manor house, the formal garden, and in the fields growing food crops near the plantation's formal and administrative center necessitated a very close physical proximity between enslaved Africans and the Burwell family. As the number of laborers and the variety of tasks they accomplished increased, so too did the spaces they inhabited. A combination of domestic, field, and skilled slaves lived in independent quarters, not always within direct sight of the manor house, but generally within short walking distance. The methods and materials used in the construction of these buildings varied greatly, as would their quality, often depending on their distance from the manor house. The plantation owner insisted on higher quality materials in those quarters viewable from the manor house or the road into the plantation as their outward appearance and arrangement reflected his investment, his control over this element of the landscape, and the value of these laborers.³⁰³

³⁰³ Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 107; Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 133; Mark R Wenger, *Carter's Grove: The Story of a Virginia Plantation* (Williamsburg, 1994).

Enslaved workers living within the plantation's formal and administrative center experienced life in stark contrast to those in distant quarters. Daily tasks kept enslaved Africans serving in domestic roles close to the Burwell's primary residence, whether in the formal garden, the manor house, or in the work yard on this west side of the manor house. The importance of tailoring, cooking, cleaning, gardening, or caring for Lewis Burwell II's children (or his horses), made their proximity an issue of convenience. It allowed for more consistent supervision and greater control over their everyday lives than over those living in distant quarters.

Living closer to the manor house provided more frequent access to goods and, potentially, more opportunities to develop and maintain skills valued by the property owner and, perhaps, the laborer. These could range from brick making and brick laying to cooking and laundry. Enslaved Africans who possessed these skills, still a relative rarity in late seventeenth-century Virginia, separated themselves from their peers and gained access to new opportunities. Their skills translated into a higher value and, when not employed at the plantation, they might be hired out to a neighbor or placed in a trade shop in a nearby port town. Lewis Burwell II's Gloucester Town lots at Gloucester Point served as a likely destination for some of his skilled slaves. Experience with and skills related to valued tasks further transformed enslaved Africans into a commodity, a source of greater potential profit. Their identity, now different from other enslaved Africans in the mind of their owner, changed in the minds of other enslaved Africans. Their unique abilities separated them, and their proximity to the manor house bifurcated the enslaved African social hierarchy.³⁰⁴

³⁰⁴ Thruston Papers, Filson Historical Society, Plat of Town of Gloucester and list of lot owners, 1707: 215-218. It is commonly felt that Gloucester Town was platted prior to 1707 and the survey of that year

The individuals and families who lived close to the manor house found that their location and their jobs set a different pace and tone. The day still began early and ended late, they prepared and consumed meals, and the need for sleep and social interaction was ever present. But changes in the management of space and time heightened the presence and influence of the plantation owner. In contrast, the plantation owner spent less time overseeing the distant quarters. These spaces often existed beyond the planter's designed landscape, situated firmly within a black landscape because the owner either did not understand or did not care.³⁰⁵

The quarter's further distance from the manor house, and the watchful eye of the slave owner, often correlated with an increased level of independence among that portion of the enslaved African population. The Rich Neck quarter in nearby Williamsburg serves as one example. Less oversight at this quarter resulted in the development of an independent slave economy between the enslaved residents and the nearby colonial town. But less surveillance at the outlying quarters benefited enslaved Africans in other ways, too. Blassingame believes that a reduced presence and influence from the plantation owner allowed male slaves to reassert their masculinity within the quarter. "Here, he could be a man." Male slaves took the opportunity to establish a position of power through their vocation and through acts of courage, intelligence, and comeliness typically impossible when under the supervision of a slave owner or overseer. The owner exhibited power in other ways, though,

documents the layout at that time, rather than the initial distribution of new lots. Lewis Burwell II owned Lot 71 while his son Nathaniel owned Lots 23, 24, 28, 29 (one town block) and 86. There is less a question of whether a social hierarchy existed within the plantation's enslaved labor force, but when it developed. Was it dependent on the number of enslaved Africans? Their region of origin in Africa? And could it evolve across plantations, involving the interconnectedness developing among enslaved Africans living on neighboring plantations?

³⁰⁵ Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 133.

specifically controlling access to manufactured goods for repairs and maintenance, retaining the best grounds for agriculture and the best trees and bricks for his own buildings.³⁰⁶

The work regimen at the outer quarters led to a preference by the owners of enslaved Africans for predictable and steady work that could be supervised by overseers. In contrast, the work regimen at the center of the plantation developed differently with a high variety of tasks with variable lengths that filled each day. Some tasks depended on the time of day, the day of the week, or the season to determine when and how long they might take and whether supervision was necessary. The range of possible tasks kept life less predictable, but the range of possibilities did not lend itself to a sense of freedom or control, necessarily. One example is tailoring, specifically the creation and repair of clothing for the enslaved and for the master and his family. It could be seasonal, with the repair of winter clothing or the letting out of tighter clothes during the summer months. It could also be spontaneous, with the changes in fashion or simply the replacement of a button or hemming a dress. In contrast to agriculture, where the plant, the sun, and the soil might dictate progress as much as the enslaved laborer's efforts, the plantation owner had greater control over the schedule and expectations of the laborers living closer to his manor house. But the act of sewing, while allowing for its own personal expression through the act of creation and modification, was still at the behest and under the oversight and approval of another person.

³⁰⁶ James Curtis Ballagh, *A History of Slavery in Virginia* (Baltimore, 1902): 104; Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 121; Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 133, 162. See also, Walsh, *From Calabar to Carter's Grove*, 199; Maria Franklin, "The Archaeological Dimensions of Soul Food: Interpreting Race, Culture, and Afro-Virginian Identity" in *Race and the Archaeology of Identity* edited by Charles E. Orser (Salt Lake City, 2001): 88-107; Blassingame, *The Slave Community*, 206.

Beyond the enslaved African's body, the slave quarter became the most visible element of their identity within a plantation. The association of slavery exclusively with Africans coincided with enslaved Africans replacing indentured servants as the primary agricultural laborers and, eventually, as the primary skilled laborers across the plantation. A similar progression occurred with the role of the quarter on the plantation. The slave owner's possession of the structure, their sense of control over its placement and design, symbolized their belief that they could control the world of enslaved Africans. The slave owner controlled where a slave slept, ate, and worked. But the same building, as seen in Chapter 3, contained elements of the enslaved African's culture, a primarily Senegambian culture in the case of late seventeenth-century Fairfield, reflecting their personal experience and life before slavery, that subverted the owner's control.

The slave quarter represented a slave's personal identity and independence and the architecture of these buildings evolved alongside the changing plantation demographics. The transition from mixed housing in the mid-seventeenth century, with white indentured servants and enslaved Africans living side-by-side, to racially segregated housing by the early eighteenth century, reframed the relationship between these groups. Contrasting methods of house design and construction, visible most in the comparison of home quarters (occasional white laborers with black laborers) with distant quarters (few, if any, white laborers), encouraged division within laborer groups and further connected enslaved Africans with the plantation as their identity drew each to their residence.

The segregation of living spaces for laborers during the late seventeenth century did not necessarily presage the formation of nucleated enslaved African families. Across the greater Chesapeake, plantations maintained an attitude towards efficiency, placing laborers closest to their tasks and at the least cost to their owners. But as plantation owners purchased increasing numbers of enslaved African women, the obvious benefits of natural increase (as a cost cutting measure) and as a negotiating technique to extract greater effort (and profit) from laborers influenced the transition towards quarters dominated by family units. As distant quarters became more family oriented, the number of children increased, and networks of social and economic interaction became more focused on supporting groups, encouraging further solidarity between slaves. By the second quarter of the eighteenth century, the number of enslaved African families grew in frequency and size as sex ratios grew nearer to balance leading to the eventual local-born slave population increasing naturally. Again, assuming general trends across the Chesapeake reflect behaviors at Fairfield, an increasingly established African-American population led to a drop in mortality and, by the beginning of the eighteenth century, the native-born population began replacing itself. Births increased as the female population increased and, by the mid-eighteenth century, slave owners either actively encouraged or tacitly condoned the formation of private spaces within quarters to accommodate multiple families and the natural growth of their human property.

The larger, more established populations of enslaved laborers on the plantations of the elite, such as Fairfield plantation, likely witnessed an earlier, but not consistent transition. Coombs believes that the ease of access to enslaved Africans,

particularly on plantations along the York River, led to less of a focus on achieving gender parity. If they needed more slaves, they simply bought more. And while this may have slowed any changes in the landscape enacted by the plantation owner to facilitate natural increase, it may have hastened other changes, such that reflect the greater diversity of enslaved Africans from other areas of West African that increasingly dominated importation to the York and James River drainage. Whether through greater cultural diversity or a strengthening internal cohesion among developing families, the plantation landscape changed as the new century arrived.³⁰⁷

The landscape that Lewis Burwell II and his first love, Abigail, envisioned never came to fruition. Abigail's death changed his priorities as the house and home, its members, and its function within the social and political world of late seventeenth-century Virginia necessitated a "complete" family unit. His second marriage, to Martha Lear Cole, sustained and likely reinvigorated this project, but resulted in a different landscape. The differences between the two, beyond the brick cartouche high upon the east gable chimney, may never be known. What is certain is that these two landscape visions, and the countless others that developed across Fairfield during its history, connected the people who lived here with their physical surroundings, their identity defined by the world around them.

The courtyard, garden, slave quarters and surrounding ancillary buildings represented a disproportionately significant portion of the larger landscape. The roads and creeks connected the outer reaches of the property, feeding into the meanings

³⁰⁷ Russell R. Menard, "The Maryland Slave Population, 1658-1730: A Demographic Profile of Blacks in Four Counties" in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 32 (1975): 33-42; Walsh, *From Calabar to Carter's Grove*, 88-89; Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 113; Coombs, *Building "The Machine,"* 129-133.

driven home by the plantation's formal and administrative center, but providing a vital connection with the world beyond the plantation. Extending further from the house one would encounter spaces that operated in concert with the plantation's manor house and surroundings, redefining and creating a landscape that embraced and perpetuated a sense of power, control, and wealth while also perpetuating a new culture of slavery.

Lewis Burwell II designed Fairfield Plantation as an impressive landscape. In his careful examination of elite culture during the colonial period, historian Rhys Isaac wrote that the landscape of colonial Virginia "was complex and experiences of it diverse, contingent on rank and condition." The desired impression for visitors, especially those educated in the meaning of formal landscapes, was one of awe and jealousy, while a persistent alternative impression was one of imprisonment and dehumanizing treatment of enslaved Africans. An outlandishly expensive undertaking, requiring constant care and maintenance, and a complete commitment to slavery, the plantation landscape was a many-layered and often conflicting symbol. Competition over landscapes persisted in their scale, content, and design, each intended to exemplify its owner's knowledge of contemporary design and skill in constructing manor houses, raising particular species of rare flowers, vegetables, and fruits in immaculately designed and maintained formal gardens, surrounded by an increasing number of specialized support buildings, agricultural fields, and slave quarters, and populated by proportionately increasing number of enslaved Africans.³⁰⁸

Lewis Burwell II envisioned these disparate elements as a single unit, bound together with the natural surroundings, and tied into the parish, county, and colony by the road network, rivers, streams, neighboring religious and governmental institutions,

³⁰⁸ Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia*, 57, 35.

and the ongoing production of tobacco and other crops that fed profits into the machine. But what about the machine? The enslaved Africans inherited by Lewis Burwell II from his parents, his uncle-in-law's estate, his second marriage, from the purchases he made, and from the families enslaved Africans made for themselves, dominated the plantation population. Their labor made possible his profits, his security, and the futures of his children. Equally important, though, the enslaved workforce built and represented his legacy.

As the designed landscape evolved around him, replacing the home of his father, his two step-fathers, and his mother, his world focused on his manor house: that certain symbol of strength, dependability, wealth, and knowledge. A massive investment of time, money, and labor, the house was a single element of a larger landscape planned from the beginning to allow the necessary expansion and modifications for an expanding family with ample ambition. The house appears to stand alone in time, persisting throughout the four subsequent generations, and into the nineteenth century. But a careful refocusing of our perspective shows the level fields, nearby spring, and roads entering and leaving the property surviving just as well. While each generation placed its mark on the plantation, changing it to meet personal needs and desires while accommodating the pressures of a changing world, the property never lost its association with the Burwells, or with the enslaved Africans who built this world. Their names are lost, the Jack Parratts, the Bungeys, the Cumbos, and the many children born and raised here and on Burwell's other plantations are largely absent from the historical record. But by modifying the landscape of a plantation, their identities persist. While the Burwells expressed a worldview of

dominance and control over the plantation, they ultimately will be judged as family that exploited others for their own benefit, that embraced and promoted slavery through their own example.³⁰⁹

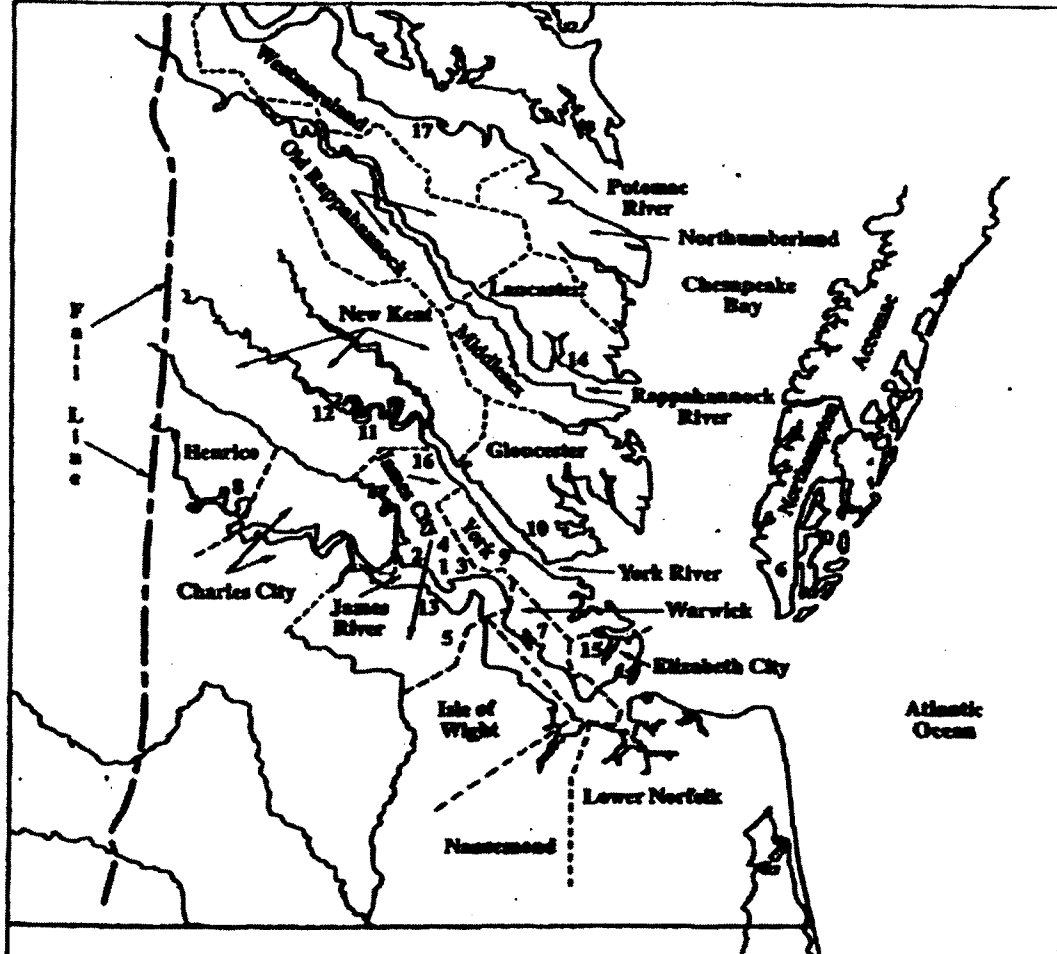
The chapter that follows examines the evidence for designed landscapes of earlier and contemporary plantations and how the direct links between the Burwells and the owners of these properties resulted in the adaptation and use of specific design elements at Fairfield. Each establishes precedent for Burwell's vision, along with potentially other as yet undiscovered plantation designs. The differences between these designs demonstrate the adaptability of plantation owners to their unique environments, highlights the circumstances which affected their designs, and the presence and role of enslaved Africans. These laborers, through their own actions and experiences, influenced the design and use of these landscapes, their meaning, and their success.

³⁰⁹ Despite changes in the outward appearance of the manor house during its 203 years, its overall dimensions dramatically changed only twice. James Deetz, "Landscapes as Cultural Statements," in *Earth Patterns: Essays in Landscape Archaeology*, edited by William Kelso and Rachel Most (Charlottesville, 1990), 3; Walsh, *From Calabar to Carter's Grove*, 229.

Chapter 6: Those that came before...

Key:

1. Jamestown
2. Governor Berkeley's Greenspring I (16406) + II (1670-76)
3. Richneck (Kemp/Ladwell) (1640s/1660s)
4. Middle Plantation
 - John Page House (1662)
 - Francis Page House (1670s)
 - House 2-3G (pre-1699)
 - Thomas Jones House (1680s)
 - Hornby Property House (1650-1700)
5. Arthur Allen House (1663)
6. John Curtis House (1670-1676)
7. Miles Cary II House (1670s)
8. Nathaniel Bacon Jr. House (1674)
9. Edward Digges House (1650-1675)
10. Lewis Burwell House (1692)
11. George Poladexter House (1690s)
12. Joseph Foster House (1690s)
13. Thomas Swann House (1650-1675)
14. John and Robert Carter Houses (1680s/1690s)
15. Edmund Swancy House (1675-1700)
16. The Stone House
17. Nominy Plantation House



Counties in Virginia after 1668 with the locations of contemporary masonry domestic structures.

Brown, "Masonry Architecture in 17th-Century Virginia," 91.

Lewis Burwell II's design of Fairfield Plantation did not appear suddenly from the ether. It emerged from his consciousness gradually, sprouting from the idea seeds planted by long discussions with his peers as he walked through their plantations,

developed further through conversations with the skilled craftsmen he hired to build his manor house, and influenced, whether he noticed or not, by the increasing numbers of tobacco plants and enslaved Africans he saw each day. The idea also emerged from his own imagination. From his aspirations to impress others, to his desire to exhibit the cosmopolitan ideas he read in contemporary books and overheard from his peers, and tempered by his concerns to manage the property he owned for his family's benefit now and for generations to come, Lewis Burwell II remade the world of his parents at this intersection of ideas and life experiences at the end of the seventeenth century, and on the backs of his enslaved workforce.

Over the course of the 1690s Lewis Burwell II built this "new" landscape, a product of a lifetime of experiences, aspirations, innovations, and adaptations to the unique circumstances of his Gloucester County plantation. Through it, he promoted his identity, his perceived position in society, and his way of life. Others would emulate his designs for generations to come, legitimizing their own positions through their plantation landscape, enslaving both the African workforce who lived within it and the physical surroundings.

Burwell's experiences on other plantations, and his plantation's influence on those that followed, positioned him at the crux of this landscape evolution. This is evident not as much in the documents that survive, but rather in the architectural and archaeological evidence, such as the distinctive chimney stacks, sash windows, glazed-header Flemish bond, and the particular placement of his manor house, the surrounding outbuildings, and outlying quarters. Innovation and adaptation are visible in his use of a formal forecourt, the construction of roads that brought visitors into his

property (and led them out), and the incorporation of the world beyond his plantation into its design, including the parish church, the mill, and neighboring farms and plantations. And his influence extended beyond the plantation network into the public forum, including the College of William and Mary and the surrounding town of Williamsburg, the plantations of his peers, and in the plantations of his many sons and daughters. His successful designs, in new forms, influenced the private and public spaces of Virginia's most prominent places, the product of what he had discussed with others and what he had seen, in person and in his mind's eye. The following two chapters connect Lewis Burwell II with his past and his future through a comparison of Fairfield with the plantations of a select group of elite merchant planters and their properties, each with a direct link to him and each who invested in enslaved Africans.

The preceding chapters' focus on the manor house and the surrounding plantation design may mislead one to consider Lewis Burwell II's interests and connections confined primarily to Gloucester County and nearby areas. And an initial reading of an early surviving quit rent roll in 1704 would apparently confirm this, with Burwell listed as owning 3300 acres in Abingdon parish. Although he was the largest landowner in the parish and second largest in Gloucester County, this was only a fraction of his property across the colony. He owned 8000 acres in Charles City County (largest landowner), 7000 acres in Isle of Wight County (second largest landowner), 4700 acres in King William County (second largest landowner), and 2100 acres in York County (second largest landowner). In five of the seven counties where he owned land he was one of the top five land owners, totaling 26,650 acres. The

numbers do no do justice to their fuller meaning, though. These properties required maintenance and investment to be productive, and surveillance to prevent squatters or encroachment from neighboring patentees. But most important, they demonstrated the breadth of his involvement in the larger colony and contrasted significantly with the worlds of his neighbors and the enslaved Africans at Fairfield.³¹⁰

People gauge their own status, and often the status of others, through various markers, whether marriage, political offices, proper behavior, clothing, land ownership, etc., But the number of enslaved Africans working the fields, or the potential value of an annual harvest, mattered to some and were irrelevant to others, suggesting that not all markers communicated the intended message. A nearly universal method for communicating one's significance and power, though, was through exhibiting control over others and the surrounding physical elements. Controlling the size, location, and design of a house, the labor of others, and the endless number of tobacco plants ordered in row upon row for as far as the eye could see - these individual acts displayed power to others. Whether rich or poor, slave or freeman, man or woman, the landscape around the house and its immediate surroundings were perhaps the most effective symbols of personal power and identity. This unit developed into a crucial investment for any member of the elite, in particular, and over time it evolved into a primary exhibit of status in the colony.

Lewis Burwell II spent his adolescence within a period of constantly changing landscapes. His five parents elevated the family's status through their actions and their

³¹⁰ Des Cognets, Jr., *English Duplicates of Lost Virginia Records*, 123-232; Blair, *The Rise of the Burwells*, 32.

reputations. By the time Burwell reached adulthood, taking over full control of his father's plantation with the passing of his mother in 1675, his peer group along the York River drainage numbered among the most influential in the colony and the most numerous, with the highest representation of Councilors (27%) during the seventeenth century.³¹¹ The elite among the colony's highest class set the precedent for Lewis Burwell II's plantation landscape aspirations. Not only did this group include early incorporators of masonry construction, but also consisted of entrepreneurs who experimented with viticulture, rice production, milling, and pottery production. In addition to these pursuits, these elite purchased increasing numbers of enslaved Africans, while also importing skilled European craftsmen.

Despite Virginia's status as one of the most well-documented and archaeologically rich colonies in the Americas, it is rare to encounter extensive excavations and significant document collections connected with the majority of plantation owners of the late seventeenth century.³¹² There is a small group of plantations, though, each with a direct connection to Lewis Burwell II and Fairfield, that serve as examples of the preceding and contemporary landscapes which may have inspired his designs and led in part to the new landscape he created. The subjects of extensive archaeological research, in most cases, these plantations are some of the best known in Virginia and include substantial historical narratives to accompany dramatic viewsheds, monumental manor houses, and occasional reconstructed landscape features such as formal gardens. But even the shortest or smallest glimpse into the complex landscapes of these late seventeenth-century plantations offers the potential

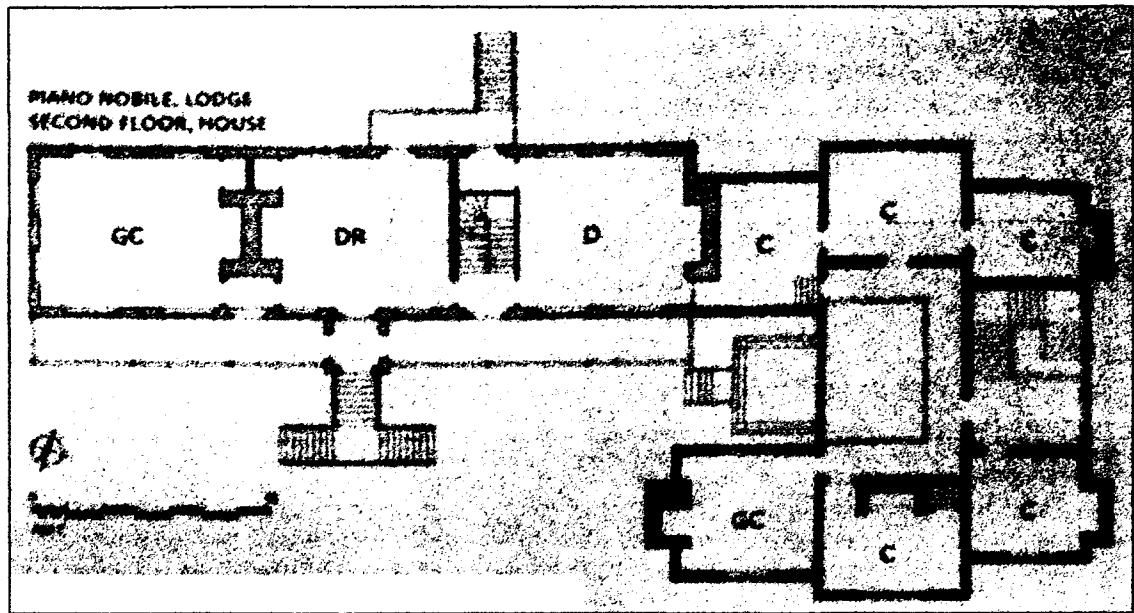
³¹¹ Coombs, *Building "The Machine,"* 92.

³¹² There is even less evidence for aspiring middling planters, the poor, or the enslaved Africans and indentured servants of this period.

to illuminate a world covered over, plowed under, or otherwise disappeared. It is not the intent of this study to group these plantations, their owners, and their enslaved workforce into a single reference point for this period, using the exceptional archaeological or documentary records of one to fill in the gaps of the other. Rather, the goal in describing them, comparing them, and contrasting them, is to highlight their complexity, the context behind their design and construction, and their singular contributions to Lewis Burwell II's life, to the design of Fairfield, and to the history of Virginia. At the top of the list, and perhaps the most important Virginian of the mid-seventeenth century, was the longest-term colonial governor in the Old Dominion's history.

William Berkeley was born to Sir Maurice and Elizabeth Killigrew Berkeley in 1605. Both were landed gentry and held stock in the Virginia Company of London. William benefitted from an informal education of mentorships with his elders, a characteristic quick wit, and a fascination with many subjects coupled with more formal schooling at Queen's College and St. Edmund Hall. His interests included agriculture and literature and left him with a "disciplined intellect and steady appetite for knowledge." According to historian Warren Billings' research, he gained a place in the household of Charles I in 1632, providing an entrée into a court literary circle known as "The Wits" where he wrote and published several plays. He later soldiered in the First and Second Bishops' Wars (1639-1640) gaining a knighthood, eventually leading to his time in Virginia, arriving as governor in 1642.³¹³

³¹³ Billings, *Sir William Berkeley*, 2, 6-8.



Reconstructed second floor plans, William Berkeley's country house (1643-45), and banqueting lodge (by 1674) at Green Spring, James City County, Virginia.
 Carson and Lounsbury, *The Chesapeake House*, 106.

Governor Berkeley designed Green Springs, the most complex and sophisticated plantation of his time, near Jamestown in James City County. The largest private home in the colony, his design incorporated locally-manufactured, hand-made brick, a floor plan unique among its colonial contemporaries, and a landscape focused on and expanding from the manor house. He introduced innovative design, experimented with style elements commonly seen in England but unprecedented in Virginia, and incorporated the same entrepreneurial approach to agriculture at his own plantation as he pushed on other planters through his position as governor. His home symbolized who he wanted to be and what he expected of the leaders of the colony. Already an investor in the burgeoning market in enslaved African laborers, his plantation design set precedent for the construction, use, and proper placement of a wide array of buildings, their interconnectedness, and the

control of the workers who populated what later visitors would characterize as "a fairly large village." He intended Green Springs to impress, to represent the height of British culture in Virginia (and perhaps the English colonies) and, most importantly, to promote the power and status of the governor, specifically himself.³¹⁴

The reputation of Green Springs and Berkeley remains to this day a symbol of the colonial prominence of Virginia within the colonial English empire. The subject of multiple extensive archaeological research projects during the formative period of the discipline, subsequent analyses of this property continue to reveal intricate and interwoven landscapes.³¹⁵ The many layers of landscape designs widen the focus of the property's significance beyond its association with the long-time governor to include other prominent people, including Lady Berkeley and her second husband, Philip Ludwell I, and the enslaved African population whose history is significant in its own right. While the subject of frequent discussion when considering the development of architecture, agriculture, landscape design, and many other subjects in the history of Virginia (i.e. viticulture, pottery production, rice cultivation, etc.), scholars appreciate the exceptional nature of the plantation and its occupants.³¹⁶ Rather than typical of the plantations of the elite, this landscape represented the

³¹⁴ Bruce, *Economic History of Virginia*, 331; Chinard, *A Huguenot Exile in Virginia*, 119-120.

³¹⁵ Jesse Dimmock, "Some Notes on 'Green Spring' in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 37 (1929), 4: 289-300; Louis R. Caywood, *Excavations at Green Spring Plantation* (Colonial National Historical Park, 1955); Andrew Veech, *Archeological Investigations--Spring 2001 of the Green Spring "Orangery Wall", Colonial National Historical Park, James City County, Virginia* (Colonial National Historical Park, 2003); Andrew Veech, *Archeological Investigations at Green Spring (44JC9), 2001-2006: Assessing the Cultural Landscape* (Colonial National Historical Park, 2009).

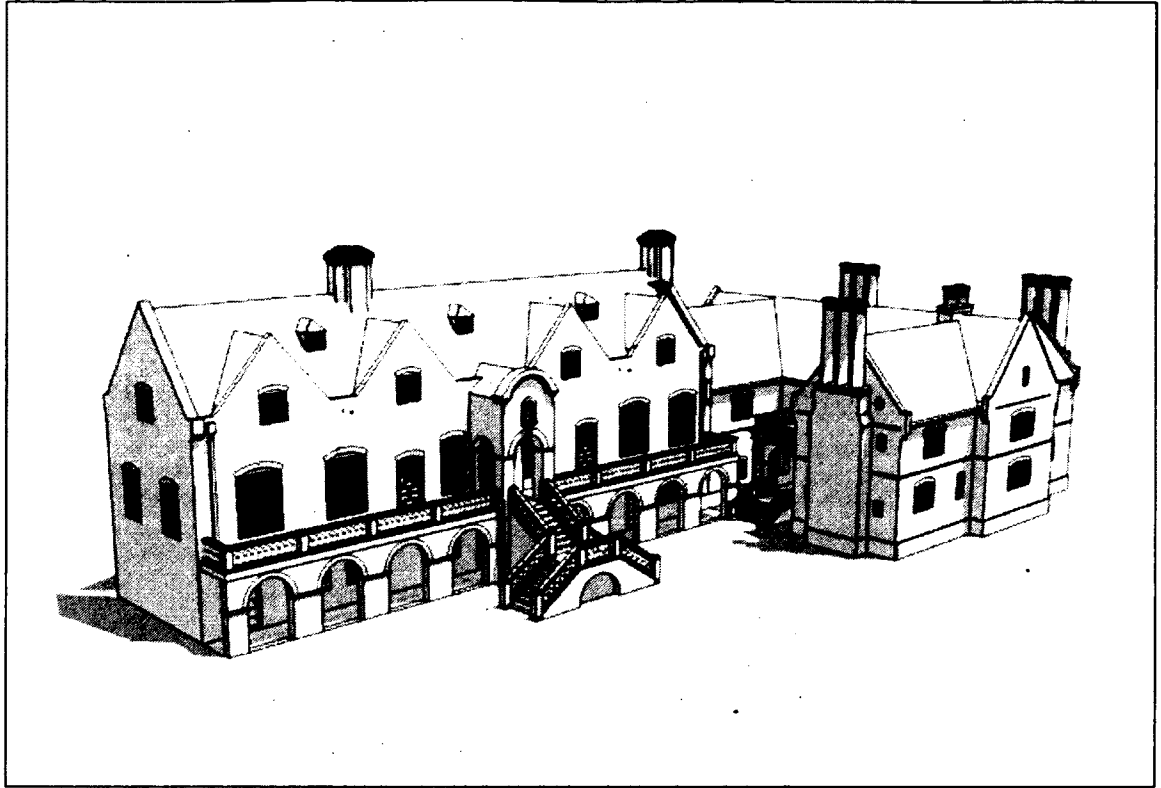
³¹⁶ Carson, "Plantation Housing: Seventeenth Century," 72, 106, 107; Jane Carson, *Green Spring Plantation in the 17th Century: House Report* (Williamsburg, 1954); James M. Smith, *The Pottery and Kiln of Green Spring: A Study in 17th Century Material Culture* (M.A. thesis, The College of William and Mary, 1981); David Colin Crass, *A Formal Analysis of the Clay Pipes from Green Spring* (M.A. thesis, The College of William and Mary, 1981).

epitome of design and desire at more than one time during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Green Springs began much like other plantations in the mid-seventeenth-century Chesapeake. A substantial parcel of 984 acres, it grew to over 2,000 acres by the time Berkeley died and the property passed to his widow, Frances Culpeper Stephens Berkeley (and through her to her later husband Philip Ludwell I, Lewis Burwell II's second step-father, who she married in 1680). Berkeley situated his first house at the southern portion of the property, facing west towards the James River. Connecting his landscape with the main road to the west, he created a visual link between his role as governor and the colony's capital at Jamestown. Berkeley constructed the "old manor house" between April 1643 and February 1645, when a letter documented that "the brick house is now in hand." Landscape historian M. Kent Brinkley describes this pioneering house as "a timber frame building, measuring sixty-eight by seventy feet, built on brick foundations with two brick towers attached" with an interior of "six rooms, as many closets, a spacious hall and two passages, with garret rooms." Its arrival in the colony immediately brought the largest, most ornate, and perhaps tallest house beyond the bounds of Jamestown Island and placed it firmly into the world of tobacco fields and forests.³¹⁷

Berkeley used his property, by that point substantially cleared and under tobacco cultivation for many years, as a proving ground and exhibit for others to

³¹⁷ Caywood, *Excavations at Green Spring Plantation*; Brinkley, *The Green Spring Plantation Greenhouse/Orangery*, 31, 32; Brinkley is careful to point out that, in the 1886 publication *Virginia Carolorum*, author Edward D. Neil described the interior quoted above but failed to cite the source of this information. See Edward D. Neill, *Virginia Carolorum: The Colony Under the Rule of Charles the First and Second, A.D. 1625-A.D. 1685, Based Upon Manuscripts and Documents of the Period* (Albany, N.Y. : J. Munsell's Sons, 1886): 204; see also Martha W. McCartney, *The History of Green Spring Plantation, Colonial National Historical Park, James City County, Virginia: Report of Archival Research* (Yorktown, 1998): 16, 17.



Reconstructed view of Green Spring house (right), 1645, and banqueting lodge (left), before 1674, James City County, Virginia, looking northeast.
Carson, "Banqueting Houses," Plate 1.

witness. He intended his planting of more than 1,500 fruit trees to inspire investments from others within the elite, not only providing him access to these goods, but developing a market and encouraging risk taking in the development of more diverse agricultural endeavors. His property, and his manor house, were showcases. His house served many roles, including entertainment space, seat of government, and center of business, while continuously serving as a symbol of status, knowledge, power and, after his marriage by 1650, of family. Brinkley's analysis of the early house and grounds suggests a significant influence from English design conventions typical of mid-seventeenth-century gardening, with "the house at its center, the

precinct enclosure...subdivided into smaller spaces by other fences or walls...with an array of the usual outbuildings located in or adjacent to this space."³¹⁸

Berkley's incorporation of architectural and landscape design precedents connected with Hartlibian geometrical design principles suggests he personally experienced Hartlib-influenced properties in England.³¹⁹ He incorporated spaces assigned to specific functions, including pleasure garden, kitchen garden, and perhaps a fruit garden, with the rough earthwork that survives east of the house serving as a possible raised terrace, a backdrop or visual end for the viewer. Berkeley's contribution to design in Virginia expanded the plantation's scale and variety, while elevating the importance of an ensemble, creating an array of images and viewsapes intended to be experienced from specific vantage points but ultimately confined within a wild and undeveloped landscape of early colonial Virginia. Unlike England, where a heavily utilized environment existed as field over forest for many generations, the young colony possessed the natural world in abundance. Rather than having to create both sides of this contrast on the other side of the Atlantic, the planters in Virginia fought an abundance of untamed acreage, constantly struggling to keep Mother Nature (and the plantation's labor force) in check.

³¹⁸ Brinkley, *The Green Spring Plantation Greenhouse/Orangery*, 32. The name of his first wife and details about her life are not known. Brinkley's research documents a detached kitchen, a laundry, a smokehouse, a dairy, a spring house, a cider press, a wood storage shed, a large brick stable to house some seventy-five horses, storage barns for grain, tobacco houses, privies, etc.

³¹⁹ Discussed in relation to Lewis Burwell II in Chapter 5, a potential influence on Berkeley's landscape design and, perhaps, his worldview, was Samuel Hartlib and his Protestant pansophism which he defined as a striving for an attainable perfection through "the free and universal sharing of every scientific advance between nations." Undoubtedly one of many influences on Berkeley, this is likely the first successful instance of transplanting sophisticated landscape design across the Atlantic ocean and into a relatively young colony - onto private property in a rural context - via the experiences of its leaders and potentially through pattern books and philosophical texts. Brinkley essentially agrees, but lacks the additional archaeological evidence compiled in this dissertation to transition from hedging his bet to full commitment. See Brinkley, *The Green Spring Plantation Greenhouse/Orangery*, 45-47; Tim Mowl, *Gentlemen & Players: Gardeners of the English Landscape* (Stroud, 2000): 12-15, 20-21; Oxford Physic Garden, opened in 1632.

The landscape of Green Springs extended far beyond its formal gardens, but its design relied as heavily on them as the manor house to exhibit the identity of the property owner. Brinkley describes the revolution in gardening in seventeenth-century England, and through this Berkeley himself, as having been influenced heavily by mannerism and Italian renaissance designs of the 1620s and 1630s. The increasingly popular designs of early seventeenth-century architects, including brothers Salomon and Isaac de Caus and Inigo Jones, "created highly complex, geometric, and enclosed estate gardens in England that began to symbolically take on political, scientific, and religious overtones." The elaborate gardens at Arundel House by Jones and at Wilton House by de Caus, where Berkeley likely visited during his early adulthood in his high position among King Charles I's courtiers (1632-41), are immortalized in paintings of the period. The governor envisioned himself as responsible for introducing physical symbols of his personal and political philosophy to Virginia's population, orienting his focus particularly towards the elite who he envisioned as spreading these ideas as leaders of the colony.³²⁰

The specifics of building arrangement, referring as much to practical design as to philosophically-structured reflections of worldview, are found in classical-inspired landscapes and architecture of increasing popularity in Europe and in occasional small manuals, such as Gervase Markham's *The English Husbandman* (1635). The "gardens and orchards out (sic) to be sited on the south side of your house, because your house will be a defense against the northern coldness, whereby your fruits will much better prosper." Markham's instructions continued with advice on kitchen placement (facing

³²⁰ Brinkley, *The Green Spring Plantation Greenhouse/Orangery*, 42-43, 148, 164, 170-173; see also, Warren M. Billings, "Imagining Green Spring House," in *Virginia Cavalcade* 44 (1994): 94-95; Roy Strong, *The Renaissance Garden in England* (London, 1979): 167.

west toward the dairy), locating horses and stock animals (north of the house), and barns (to the south, near the hen house and garden). Few Chesapeake planters knew of these and similar early guides for estate layout, the practical observations likely emerging from local traditions, commonly held beliefs; and trial-and-error; a common understanding based on a shared agricultural tradition would link the visual landscapes of the poorest and the wealthiest planters. The ability to create the formal landscapes elevated the elite planter among his peers through his demonstration of this knowledge. The construction of this landscape, though, communicated a message understood by more than just the colonial elite.³²¹

The introduction of these design principals at a time preceding the dramatic influx of enslaved Africans makes Green Spring an important case study in how the demographic changes later in the century resulted in an altered plantation design. Already home to a veritable army of skilled white craftspeople and enslaved Africans by the third quarter of the seventeenth century, the plantation design proved an early accommodator of a new system of labor management that acknowledged the increasing role of enslaved Africans, the continued need for skilled, largely European servants, and the increasing perception that these two groups must be treated differently.³²²

Green Springs served as touchstone for Fairfield plantation and its contemporaries at the end of the seventeenth century. Under the direction of the Governor, and inspired by his experimentation with European design in the relatively unique environment of Virginia, it inarguably proved that English estates could be

³²¹ John R. Stilgoe, *The Common Landscape of America, 1580 to 1845* (New Haven, 1982), 149.

³²² Cary Carson, editor, *Becoming Americans: Our Struggle to Be Both Free and Equal: a Plan of Thematic Interpretation* (Williamsburg, 1998): 78.

successfully transplanted into the colony. A "new mansion house" at Green Springs, though, proved a greater influence on the specific design elements and the full range of possibilities open to the emerging elite merchant planters of the period. It far outlasted Berkeley's first house and would hold greater sway in the design and construction of Virginia plantations in the decades that followed.

Measuring twenty-four feet, nine inches wide by ninety-seven feet, five inches long, with two-feet, four-inch-thick brick walls, it held up three massive stories and towered over every other building in sight. "From the start," historian Cary Carson states, "Green Spring was unrivalled anywhere in British North America." He continues, "it was the country's first fully developed English country house set in an expansive park-like landscape that its builder intended as the fullest expression of a cultivated gentility." Interpreted variously as a manor house, a west wing to the original manor house, or a venue exclusively for entertainment, it diverted attention from the plantation's established domestic residence towards this new building and a new imagining of the surrounding environment. The intentional shift of the landscape ninety degrees, from west to south, heightened the visual connection between the plantation and the colony's capital at Jamestown. This concept extended further afield through construction of a road, and a direct line of sight, that assured a visual hierarchy with Green Springs looking down upon and dominating the colony's island capital. The new house took "full advantage of views, optics, and perspective in a way that perhaps no other house in Virginia had," becoming "the most famous, the finest,

and the most notable private house in the entire seventeenth-century Virginia colony."³²³

Who constructed it and when is a subject of much debate. One interpretation of the landscape suggests Philip Ludwell I and Lady Berkeley built it after their marriage in 1680.³²⁴ The rationale in connecting this building with a new generation of elite merchant planters follows a line of logic that promotes new experimentation in architecture and a changing social dynamic that influenced Lewis Burwell II. Brinkley points out that such substantial construction of an elegant building that incorporated sophisticated design clearly exhibits elevated aspirations and ideals of the colony's wealthiest citizens, and not just its governor. But it also implies a dramatic reshaping of the larger plantation landscape, as well as an undertaking that any property owner would acknowledge as a substantial investment of money and time. An alternative explanation, promoted by historian Cary Carson and others, suggests it was finished "by 1674." Would Berkeley have considered a second massive construction project in addition to the political and social commitments required of him? And at an age when many of his contemporaries had passed? Or did his new wife, prospects from increased control of trade along Virginia's frontier, and a desire

³²³ Virginia Barrett Price, *The Making, Remaking, and Unmaking of Green Spring Between 1643 and 1803* (M.A. thesis, University of Virginia, 2001): 44-45, 45 n33. Carson, "Plantation Housing: Seventeenth Century," 107.

³²⁴ There are two primary theories about when the second house was constructed. The first coincides with Berkeley's marriage to his second wife, Lady Frances Culpeper Stevens, in 1670. The marriage would have brought with it substantial money and property while, at about the same time, he and his wife liquidated assets, including real estate holdings. The second theory suggests it was not built until about 1680 after Lady Berkeley married Philip Ludwell I. Using the same line of logic, Ludwell also brought extensive wealth and Lady Berkeley again liquidated assets. See Brinkley, *The Green Spring Plantation Greenhouse/Orangery*, 32; McCartney, *The History of Green Spring Plantation*, 24-25, 43-44, 50.

to maintain his elevated status among the colony's elite provide him with renewed energy and ambition?³²⁵

Regardless, scholars agree that by the period Lady Frances Berkeley and Philip Ludwell I owned Green Springs, its served primarily as a rental property to the colony's Governors; the couple resided at Philip's deceased brother's nearby plantation, Rich Neck. Lady Berkeley described her prior home and current rental property in 1678 as "the finest seat in America & the only tolerable place for a Governor." It stood alongside the earlier manor house for some time, likely into the last decade of the seventeenth century. It might be considered counter-logical to attribute such a substantial investment in a building campaign and landscape redesign to a rental property rather than one's personal estate. Viewing it through the perspective of an aspiring governor-to-be, though, one can rationalize the endeavor as having the dual benefits of reflecting positively on the builders and their nearly unrivaled political ambitions. This powerful couple not only had aspirations for the future governorship of the colony (he later became governor of North Carolina), but may have inherited the moral responsibility from William Berkeley to present the very best of Virginia to the new governor: the most direct connection with the King of England. A member of the Governor's Council since the year his first wife, Lucy Higginson Burwell Bernard Ludwell, died in 1675, Philip Ludwell I reached the pinnacle of his influence in Virginia with his marriage to Lady Berkeley and his control of Green Springs. How

³²⁵ The latter argument supposes the landscape redesign and construction of the second house was prior to Bacon's Rebellion (1676) as Berkeley returned to England soon after the conflict. Carson, "Plantation Housing: Seventeenth Century," 107. Architectural historian Edward Chappell and historical archaeologist Ivor Noël Hume believe that Ludwell, rather than Berkeley, constructed the later building, but they are in the minority. Dimmick, Caywood, Waterman, Forman, Billings, McCartney, Price and Carson believe it was Berkeley. For a summary of the debate, see Brinkley, *The Green Spring Plantation Greenhouse/Orangery*, 32.

they shaped the landscape, marking this already prominent showpiece of Virginia's potential, connected their reputations with that of the colony.³²⁶

The re-creation of this plantation represented an understanding of the Old World's approach to landscape design. It also demonstrated the sophisticated application of these principles modified for the economic and social realities of the late seventeenth-century Chesapeake, and particularly the emerging labor demographics of a new tobacco-focused plantation. This is an early example of what historian Carter L. Hudgins observed for the elite of the eighteenth century. Hudgins, through an analysis of the house and material goods of Robert Carter of Lancaster County (see later in this chapter), connected the building and buying habits of Virginia's wealthiest planters with the emergence of a more widespread, elite material culture in the 1720s. This shift may have begun earlier, though, within an even smaller group. The archaeological and architectural evidence on which Hudgins based his initial conclusions allows for a wider range of initial occurrence that extends into the final decades of the seventeenth century.³²⁷ By 1720, the colony's wealthiest

³²⁶ Brinkley, *The Green Spring Plantation Greenhouse/Orangery*, 34, 61; McCartney, *The History of Green Spring Plantation*, 42, 44-45, 47-50, 51. Brinkley writes "Green Spring was, in fact, rented in the 1680s to several royal governors for their use as official residence, and the house also served periodically during those years as the temporary capitol and meeting place of both the Governor's Council and the House of Burgesses." Philip Ludwell I's son, also Philip, likely took the first building down when he assumed ownership of the property in 1695 or soon after his marriage about 1697. Philip Ludwell II did not inherit the property from his father until sometime after 1710 when the elder Ludwell died in England. Camille Wells, "The Planter's Prospect: Houses, Outbuildings, and Rural Landscapes in Eighteenth-Century Virginia," in *Winterthur Portfolio* 28 (1993): 14.

³²⁷ The amount of diagnostic material culture recovered from archaeological excavations that date to the 1680-1720 period is relatively small. While Hudgins avoided the tendency by many of his contemporaries in Virginia archaeology to assign periods of occupation to the earliest available instances of a fragment of material culture found in an excavation (rather than its period of greatest popularity or its likely period of deposition), without the benefit of additional datable material he is limited in when he can assign a period of activity. His work is further complicated by the subsequent changes in how architectural historians have changed their assignment to particular buildings and landscape elements on well known plantations, and the emergence of greater numbers of comparable examples from the 1680-1720 period. Hudgins work draws heavily on his observations from many

planters fully invested in the construction of sophisticated designed plantations with a clearly defined "architecture of yards and gardens...ordered and organized according to rules as strict and orderly as those which framed the social discourse of individuals inside their houses." Hudgins acknowledges that Green Spring served as precedent for this trend, and specifically for the increasingly segregated spaces that were "less fluid, divided and sub-divided into spaces and routines that kept interaction between white planters and black laborers predictable." But essential to this development is the timeliness of this initial shift among the elite, the propagation of this idea among the elite, and how it further affected the lives of both groups within the plantation.³²⁸

The processional and articulated plantation landscapes of the merchant-planter elite symbolized personal liberty and individualism. The designs incorporated the elite's desire for increased privacy and, ironically, control over the movement of others, creating a network of linked sequential spaces, "hierarchical, leading to [the owner] at the center...tied to the public landscape by carefully conceived roads and drives." While this is as much figurative as literal, the control of movement and access is visible in the elite's creation of new roads and manipulation of established roads, particularly the use of multiple avenues of ingress and egress for a plantation. Whether a simple case of expediency, or part of a larger concept that sprung from personal experiences and conversations mentioned above, Green Springs incorporated three different roads into its larger landscape design. Each road had a specific

years of archaeology, but primarily on his excavations of the Miles Cary house and extensive fieldwork on Corotoman Plantation (discussed later in this chapter).

³²⁸ Carter assigns this period to 1740, but I believe the earlier period of 1720 is more reasonable based on current evidence. See Carter L. Hudgins, "The Archaeology of Plantation life in 18th-Century Virginia," in *The Archaeology of 18th-Century Virginia*, edited by Theodore R. Reinhart (Richmond, 1996): 53; Anne E. Yentsch and Judson M. Kratzer, "Techniques for Excavating and Analyzing Buried Eighteenth-Century Garden Landscapes" in *The Archaeology of Garden and Field*, edited by Naomi F. Miller and Kathryn L. Gleason (Philadelphia, 1994): 181.

purpose, such that a traveler or a laborer on the plantation would understand its role as they witnessed the "elements of movement...built into its forms" and its "architectural details...disposed along it in a carefully planned sequence." Whether a connector with the nearby mill, a field quarter, or the primary path to Jamestown Island, the road, as with the other elements of the planned landscape, was "experience as intended...a powerful and intense ideological statement."³²⁹

Roads are most directly associated with travel, the movement of people and goods from one place to the other, along a specific route maintained for that purpose. Part of their significance within the designed plantation included their control over the movement of others. But formal gardens, with their interlocking paths and their multitude of miniature viewsapes, contributed equally to this concept. Considering the way in which a space (garden or otherwise) is experienced, it is important to consider the landscape in multiple dimensions and senses. Specifically, Elizabeth Kryder-Reid explains "the garden's topography, barriers, and visual screens not only directed views, but also regulated visitor's access to the landscape." Not only does this consideration of the landscape inform the perspective of the garden's intended audiences, but it also reveals clues for what messages it implied. Creating the scenes of wealth and knowledge, sometimes embodied in a single flower or a bed of asparagus, required the parallel spread of ideas and objects, both natural and man-made. Philip Ludwell I's gardens and his interests in the cultivation of relatively rare

³²⁹ Upton, "White and Black Landscapes," 362-363, 367; Anne E. Yentsch, *A Chesapeake Family and Their Slaves: A Study in Historical Archaeology* (New York, 1994): 128, 272; Brinkley, *The Green Spring Plantation Greenhouse/Orangery*, 68; McCartney, *The History of Green Spring Plantation*, 33; from 1676 there were three separate "Avenues and Approaches" into the site connected with the main entrance lane west to Newcastle Road, a farm road to the south and Jamestown Island, precedent for the future main driveway for the "new Mansion house" and a farm road to the north towards other quarters/fields, perhaps an early iteration of the current Centerville Road, Route 614.

and exotic plants developed within a small circle of transatlantic botanists, including Henry Compton, the bishop of London, who was an avid gardener and plant collector. While Berkeley may have shared in this interest, it is certain that Ludwell's son, Philip II, continued his father's fascination and practice. Much like the other elements of the Green Springs landscape, especially from these early periods, the simple presence of the roads, the gardens, and the plants therein elevate the importance of this plantation as a major influence on elite merchant planters of the period. The detailed arrangement of the plants, the buildings aligned along the roads and at their terminus, and the interconnectedness of the manor house with these landscape features remains a question for future research.³³⁰

As the most prominent and best known plantation of the third quarter of the seventeenth century, Green Springs is significant regardless of its connection with Lewis Burwell II and Fairfield. The direct connection that linked the two plantations, though, further highlights how the spread of ideas through experience, through personal relationships, and through the meaning associated with landscapes and their owners/creators, defined the evolution of plantation design. Lewis Burwell II and William Berkeley existed within the same social circles during the former's early adulthood. His exposure to Berkeley's plantation is assumed, but the more defined period of influence begins when Burwell's second step-father took control of the estate in 1680. Through Philip Ludwell I's reinvention of Berkeley's world, Burwell witnessed the symbolic and political benefits of such a massive undertaking,

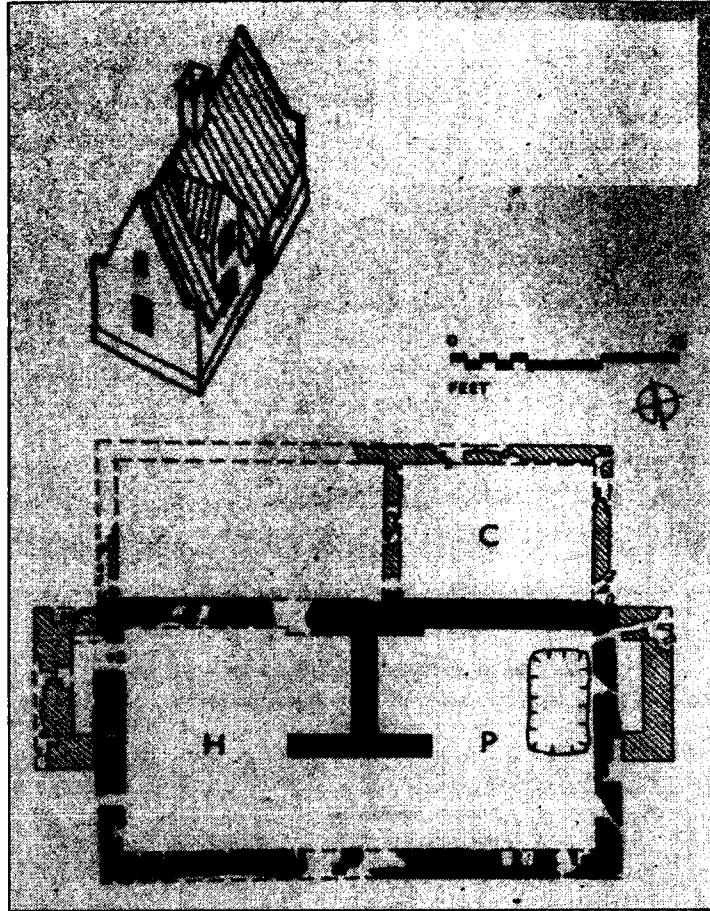
³³⁰ Elizabeth Kryder-Reid, "The Archaeology of Vision in Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake Gardens," in *Journal of Garden History*, issue ed. D. Fairchild Ruggles and Elizabeth Kryder-Reid, 14 (1994), 1: 1-2; Peter Martin, *The Pleasure Gardens of Virginia: From Jamestown to Jefferson* (Princeton, 1991): 8.

recognizing the direct association between the individual and his surroundings - the value of a world remade in one's own image.

The expanded role of late seventeenth-century Virginia's elite merchant planters' wealth and aspirations expanded far beyond the previous generation. Their wealth and desire to emulate British culture allowed for extravagant displays of power and knowledge that even constructing the most sophisticated plantation landscape in the colony as a rental property seems plausible. To that end, it is not difficult to imagine it as an unspoken requirement for inclusion in this upper echelon of developing Virginia society. There were ample reasons for Burwell to visit and experience this landscape. Ludwell and the widow Berkeley controlled the appearance of the plantation, its design, and its use. While constrained to some degree by the physical surroundings, and the physical precedent of Governor Berkeley's designs, they possessed the funds and knowledge to further develop the plantation and place their own mark on the then-home of the colony's leaders. As Lewis Burwell II increased his political stature and joined the colony's elite at Jamestown, attending government meetings and likely entertainment at Green Springs, this plantation established a precedent for how the leaders of the colony wanted to be seen.³³¹

Philip Ludwell II's residence, to a lesser degree than his rental property, included a complex landscape that further highlighted the potential design options available to the merchant-planter elite. The site of extensive excavations by the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, the Rich Neck plantation earlier owned by his

³³¹ The potential use of Ludwell's construction of a second "house" at Green Springs, primarily as a venue for entertainment, may also lend further credence to the similar construction of buildings as entertainment or party houses, or for something beyond primary residences, at Fairfield, Corotoman, and other plantations.



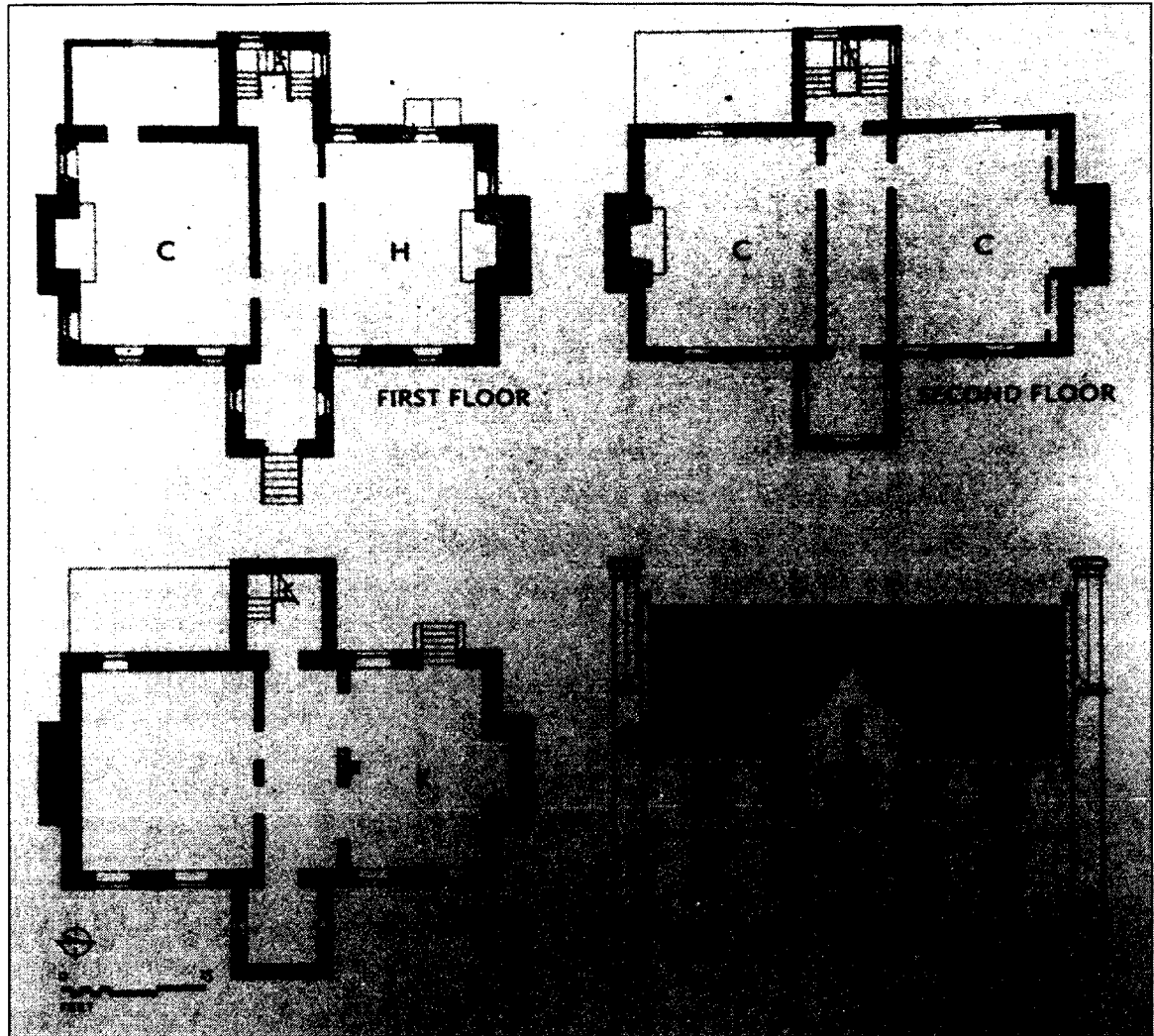
Rich Neck plantation site, James City County, Virginia, as built by Richard Kemp, 1642, and later altered and enlarged by Thomas Ludwell, 1665.
 Carson and Lounsbury, *The Chesapeake House*, 96.

brother, Thomas Ludwell, came under Philip's ownership in 1678. Originally constructed as a small complex of buildings by Richard Kemp, Thomas Ludwell expanded the plantation with a formal courtyard between an expanded kitchen and redesigned manor house. The landscape extended further from the manor house with auxiliary buildings arranged on axes with the primary residence, surrounded by agricultural fields, and arranged to introduce visitors to a controlled environment. The archaeological evidence highlights the development of the acreage immediately surrounding the manor house. The abandonment of the plantation as a primary

residence early in the eighteenth century establishes these buildings as contributing elements of Thomas, and likely Philip and Lady Berkeley's, domestic landscape.³³²

The two Green Springs and the Ludwell family's designs at Rich Neck plantation are not alone as examples of experimentation on seventeenth-century plantation landscapes. On Virginia's Eastern Shore, John Custis invested heavily in his plantation manor house, the three-story mannerist behemoth known as Arlington in Northampton County. Visible from a great distance, a traveler described it in the seventeenth century as a "Dwelling house built of brick abt the year 1676 of the Dimensions of upwards of 80 (30) foot [by] 60 three storys high besides garrets which House was commonly called Arlington." Historian Cary Carson described the building, one of the earliest double-pile houses in the colonies, as "the most sophisticated house plan of any known dwelling in the southern colonies until Alexander Spotswood designed the Governor's Palace in Williamsburg a generation later." Contemporary buildings also include Thomas Swann's house at Swann's Point in Surry County and Edward Digge's Bellfield in York County. The former is a long (60.5') but relatively narrow (22') building minimally surveyed by archaeologists in the 1970s, while the latter included an early double-pile arrangement of rooms (47' x 34') with two massive interior chimneys. Frustratingly little is known of these homes beyond brief (former) and poorly documented (latter) excavations, and occasional inventories. While the majority of archaeologically identified or historically documented brick buildings of the 1670s and 1680s in the colony incorporated cruciform plans, with either stair and/or porch towers, the development of minor variations in the house design likely pales in comparison to the understudied aspects of

³³² McFaden et al., *Interim Report: The Archaeology of Rich Neck Plantation*.



Plans and restored front elevation, Bacon's Castle, 1665, with alterations made before 1755, Surry County, Virginia.

Carson and Lounsbury, *The Chesapeake House*, 22.

the surrounding landscape. The exception to these examples is the oldest standing house in Virginia: the house now known as Bacon's Castle.³³³

³³³ Emmett Collection, New York Public Library; Cary Carson, Personal Communication, Vice President of Research (retired), Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 2013. See also, John C. Bedell and Nicholas M. Lucchetti, "An Archaeological Assessment of Arlington, Northampton County, Virginia," unpublished site report (Jamestown, 1988); Nicholas M. Lucchetti, Edward A. Chapell, and Beverly A. Straube, *Archaeology at Arlington: Excavations at the Ancestral Custis Plantation, Northampton County, Virginia* (Jamestown, VA, 1999); Brown, "Domestic Masonry Architecture," 85-120.

There are remarkable parallels between the lives of Lewis Burwell II and Arthur Allen II, whose father built the large brick house in 1665. The similarities allow an interesting, albeit brief, comparison of regional variation among the elite. Regardless of their upbringing and adult lives on the Middle Peninsula and the Southside of Virginia (respectively), they exemplified the emergence of an established merchant-planter class out of a wealthy, but locally-focused, parent generation of the mid-seventeenth century. The influence these men and their landscapes had on the development of the colony brings attention to the value of the archaeological record, its reflection of architectural design choices, and the social and economic implications of large-scale plantation design.³³⁴

Lewis Burwell II and Arthur Allen II entered this world (1651) and left it (1710) in the same years. Their fathers, immigrants who established their families in frontier counties at a politically and economically expedient period in the mid-seventeenth century, focused on local politics rather than involvement on the Governor's Council. Arthur Allen I likely acted as a factor for an English firm, having the title of "merchant" in 1659, and acting as a middle-man for neighboring planters by collecting their tobacco along with his own and transporting it for sale in England. He possessed a significant labor force for mid-seventeenth-century Surry County, including 11 adult laborers in 1668, adequate for cultivating tobacco on a large scale. He supplemented his income from the collection of rents on his substantial plantation lands, which grew to 1,850 acres by 1665. By the time he died after May 15th, 1669,

³³⁴ Nicholas Lucchetti, *Archaeological Excavations at Bacon's Castle, Surry County, Virginia* (Richmond, 1987): 1.

Allen was by all measures among the wealthiest merchant-planters in Surry County. And he had a brick manor house, too.³³⁵

The Burwell and Allen families, already established but upwardly mobile, set up their sons with the momentum necessary to enter colony-wide politics. In the case of Arthur Allen II, his father not only left him with a substantial, sophisticated brick house (built in 1665), but he positioned him as an up-and-coming member of a prominent family. His political career started in 1673 and by 1675 he held several local offices in quick succession, including county commissioner, county surveyor, justice of the peace, vestryman, and Major in the Surry County militia. Elected to the House of Burgesses in 1682, he later held positions of Speaker of the House of Burgesses and the lucrative job of Naval Officer of the Upper District of the James River. He expanded the family's plantation in Surry County and acquired lands in neighboring Isle of Wight County, accruing over 8,500 acres and 23 tithables by the 1670s and increasing his holdings to nearly 10,000 acres by his death. Similarly, his investment in enslaved Africans grew as his property increased, consistently owning around five slaves in the 1680s, increasing to 13 by 1700, and 28 in the year before his death. Over the same period, his investment in white indentured servants never eclipsed three, and was often zero. By the time of his death, using his inventory as comparison, historian Kevin Kelly concludes that Arthur Allen II owned an estate more than 19 times larger than the average inventoried estate in Surry County. In the

³³⁵ Kevin P. Kelly, *The Allens of Bacon's Castle: A Report for the A.P.V.A.* (Richmond, 1974): 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 29; Surry County, Virginia, Deeds, Wills, Etc., I 1652-1672: 315-317, 338, 363, V (1694-1709): 35; Arthur Allen II died on June 15th (Thursday) 1710 at 59 years old. See also, Wright and Tinling, *The Secret Diary of William Byrd*, 193. Arthur Allen I was an original county commissioner and Justice of the Peace in 1652. For what may have been the first commission for Surry County in 1652, see the unnumbered pages at the back of the first deed book.

categories of land ownership, office holding, and control of enslaved laborers, Arthur Allen II rivaled Lewis Burwell II in nearly every way.³³⁶

The similarities continued in the two men's family lives. Arthur Allen II married about the same time as Lewis Burwell II, taking the hand of Captain Lawrence Baker's daughter, Katherine, no later than 1681, and having at least eight children (four sons and four daughters) beginning with Elizabeth in the 1680s. Allen played a prominent role in his parish, Lawnes Creek Church existing within sight of his home. Arthur Allen II was a Captain by 1677 and reached Major by 1681 (Lewis Burwell II reached Major by 1680). They both owned a wide array of common plantation buildings, with Allen's estate inventory specifying a milk house, pantry, kitchen, still house and an unfinished mill house. The two men both diversified their economic pursuits when possible, Allen investing in wool (sheep) and providing provisions to plantations in Barbados (including pickled pork as early as 1687). His livestock (cattle, hogs, etc.) accounted for 42% of his total estate value.³³⁷

³³⁶ Kelly, *The Allens of Bacon's Castle*, 10, 13, 22-23, 26; Surry County, Virginia, Deeds, Wills, Etc., II (1671-1684): 5; Surry County, Virginia, Court Orders, I (1671-1691): 38. Arthur Allen II served as county surveyor (1680-1685, 1688-1698, and 1704-1707); Sainsbury, W. Noel, John W. Fortescue, Cecil Headlam, and K.G. Davies, ed.s. *Calendar of State Papers: Colonial Series*, Volume 10 (London, 1896): 12, 320; H.R. McIlwaine and W.L. Hall, eds., *Executive Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia* (Richmond, 1925-1945), I: 366; II: 350; Surry County Virginia, Court Orders, I (1671-1691): 393; II (1691-1713): 261, 298; Arthur Allen II owned approximately 9,880 acres when he died in 1710. Surry County, Virginia, Deeds, Wills, Etc., II (1671-1684): 203, 241, 282, 310; IV (1687-1694): 106, 231, 335, 352; V (1694-1709): 121, 122, 252, 335, 397, 420; Surry County, Virginia, Deeds, Wills, Etc., VI (1709-1715): 49-103. It should also be noted that despite its proximity to Virginia's colonial capital, Surry remained isolated, always on the periphery of society and consequently became "poor mans" territory. Indeed, historian Edmund Morgan has shown that in the third quarter of the seventeenth century, Surry may have been the poorest county in all of Virginia, having the largest percentage of one-man households and the smallest percentage of households with more than five tithables. See Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, 226-229; Nicholas Lucchetti, *Archaeological Excavations at Bacon's Castle, Surry County, Virginia* (Richmond, 1987): 2-3.

³³⁷ Kelly, *The Allens of Bacon's Castle*, 9, 14, 27, 28; Surry County, Virginia, Deeds, Wills, Etc., II (1671-1684): 203, 282, 292. See also Surry County, Virginia, Deeds, Wills, Etc., VI (1709-1715): 97, 35; Mason, *Records of Colonial Gloucester County*, Volume 1, 15; Surry County, Virginia, Deeds, Wills, Etc., VIII (1730-1738): 254. While his "two small sail boats" provided access to the larger waterways of the Chesapeake and allowed Allen to perform his duties as a naval officer, they likely did

They grew up as contemporaries, separated by two rivers - or more likely connected by them. Most important to this comparison, though, is their documented collaboration in 1697. On June 11th of that year, John Carrell of Isle of Wight County sued the two men. The suit claims that "without any Surveyor or patent to direct them [they] came forceably upon the petrs land which he hath long and peaceably enjoyed, and marked ye trees thereupon, and took ye same into the said Burwells possession, terrifying ye petrs being a poor man." The following October 20th, Burwell and Allen appeared before the Council and after "being fully heard, and it not appearing that the sd Major Allen is authorized or qualified, to make Surveyes, or taken the Oaths appointed by Law" it was concluded that Allen's surveys were "not warrantable or of any Effect" and Carrell was "referred to his further remedy at Law." The case was more complicated than it appeared on paper, though.³³⁸

Arthur Allen II's rise to power linked directly with his involvement with the Green Spring faction, which he joined following the turbulent tobacco riots of 1682. He shared with this group a negative perception of royal governors' attempts to consolidate power. With Robert Beverley and Philip Ludwell I backing his candidacy, his contemporaries elected him Speaker of the House of Burgesses multiple times during the contentious assemblies when Howard Lord Effingham governed Virginia. His political career faltered, though, when he refused to take the oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy, which kept him from any role in colony-wide politics throughout the

not rival the multiple seaworthy vessels owned by Burwell, though; Lewis C. Gray, *History of Agriculture in the Southern United States to 1860* (Gloucester, 1958), I: 209. Evidence of Allen's West Indian trading can be found in a court case he filed against Thomas Partridge, Surry County, Virginia, Deeds, Wills, Etc., I 1652-1672: 615.

³³⁸ This land, based upon entry of 20 October 1697 (p. 372), appears to lie in Isle of Wight County; see H.R. McIlwaine, ed., *Executive Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia*, Volume I, (11 June 1680 - 22 June 1699) (Richmond, 1925): 366, 372; Blair, *The Rise of the Burwells*, 24.

1690s. This moral stand likely cost him a position on the Governor's Council and literally cost him the significant revenues collected through fees due his now lost political positions. Although Arthur Allen II would later join the governors of the College of William and Mary (1702) and reclaim many of his prior political appointments after the ascension of King William and Queen Mary to the English throne, his indebtedness to the new governor, Francis Nicholson, who quickly alienated much of the Council of State and House of Burgesses, placed him in solid opposition to the Green Spring faction, now dominated by James Blair.³³⁹

The verdict brought down by the county judges against Burwell and Allen in their conflict with Carrell may have been connected with the continued punishment that came out of his refusals to take the oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy. Having served as Surry County's surveyor for many years, the justifications used against him must have been a particular shock. Perhaps this provides some insight into Burwell's involvement with politics of this period. Alternatively, a transaction such as this is less revealing and more commonplace, a product of the inter-county politics of this period. Regardless, the connection draws the two people into direct contact, Burwell extending his landed interests into Isle of Wight County alongside Allen, already a significant landowner. A convincing argument could be made for their having known

³³⁹ Allen II joined the Green Spring faction c. 1685, with Robert Beverley and Philip Ludwell. See Kelly, *The Allens of Bacon's Castle*, 15, 17, 18, 20; Surry County, Virginia, Orders, I 1652-1672: 466; H.R. McIlwaine and John P. Kennedy, *Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia, 1659/1660-1693* (Richmond, 1905-1915): 194-218; Thomas B. Macaulay, Baron, *The History of England from the Accession of James the Second*, edited by Charles H. Firth (London, 1913), III: 1401; Kelly speculates that Arthur Allen II would have ascended to the Governor's Council if he had not removed himself from politics in the 1690s. He was nominated by Colonel Jennings, President of the Council, for any vacant seat in 1709. See Cecil Headlam, *Calendar of State Papers, America and West Indies*, Vol. 24: 1708-1709 London, H.M.S.O., 1916: 163; H.R. McIlwaine and W.L. Hall, eds., *Executive Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia* (Richmond, 1925-1945), II: 232-233, 271, 350; Surry County, Virginia, Orders, II (1671-1684): 227; "Council Papers, 1698-1701," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 24 (1916), 1: 73; Vol. 24, No. 1 (Jan., 1916), pp. 70-76; Cecil Headlam, *Calendar of State Papers, America and West Indies*, Vol. 22: 1704-1705 London, H.M.S.O., 1916: 105.

and interacted with one another simply by their status and their role in colony politics. This partnership solidifies their relationship, though, and documents a level of engagement that further connects their interests and experiences.³⁴⁰

The two men will forever be associated with brick houses and the triple diagonally-set chimney stacks. But there are significant differences between these buildings and the designs implemented. Constructed along the seventeenth-century frontier, Arthur Allen I built this sophisticated house at the age of 57. Arthur Allen II did not assist his father in the construction of his magnificent brick home - his attention focused on his fifth or sixth year of education in England. During a period when some of the elite merchant planters in Virginia, such as Colonel Thomas Pettus and former Governor of Carolina William Drummond, chose to live in timber frame houses, Arthur Allen I chose a different option. Measuring 45 feet 6 inches by 25 feet 2 inches, "Allens Brick House" is a two-and-a-half story brick structure with distinct window surrounds and a molded belt course on the south facade. Alongside its distinctive chimney stacks, the porch and stair towers and curvilinear gables, constructed entirely in English bond, reveal a building (and builder) "abreast of the latest building innovations in mid-century England" but who decided on a layout that

³⁴⁰ By 1704 Arthur Allen II possessed 6,780 acres in Surry and 1,800 acres in Isle of Wight (8,580 total). Kelly, *The Allens of Bacon's Castle*, 20; Thomas J. Wertenbaker, *The Planters of Colonial Virginia* (New York, Russell & Russell, 1959): 191-197. Their paths also collided through the estate of William Cole. The depression of the early 1680's hit Allen as hard and to keep himself solvent, he sold off a portion of his estate, 432 acres, to Colonel Lear of Nansemond County in 1681. Lear was the husband of Lewis Burwell II's future second wife, Martha Lear Cole, and this property would descend to Burwell through his marriage to her in 1698; Surry County, Virginia, Deeds, Wills, Etc., IV (1687-1694): 65-66, 71.

would match the regional, Virginia house interior, albeit with an extra story and basement kitchen.³⁴¹

The acreage surrounding the manor house, patented by Arthur Allen I in 1649 and perhaps settled before then, is a curious candidate for having the oldest surviving brick house in Virginia. An earlier house site, referred to as the Mill site (1630-1650), is about 800 to 900 feet east of the 1665 manor house.³⁴² The site, as the name projects, is adjacent the later mill and along a tributary of the Lower Chippoakes Creek, known today as the Castle Mill Run. Arthur Allen I's selection of this property for his brick house exists counter to the overwhelming preference by elite merchant planters for the deepwater access and prominent position of acreage closer to a major waterway. Allen's sole access to the James River came from Castle Mill Run. It is hardly navigable now, much of the three mile distance between the house site and the James River having silted in significantly over the last three hundred years. At one time the watercourse served as a major conduit between Arthur Allen I's property and the Atlantic world. Limited water access did not appear to hinder his, or his son's, ambitions. The mill remained unfinished until after Arthur Allen II's passing and the mill dam may have been equally delayed, further suggesting greater access along the run earlier in its history. The success of this in-land plantation, though, came from the

³⁴¹ Nicholson mss. 1705, "Pursuant to Your Excellencys command I have hereunder given a brief account of Majr. Arthur Allen of Surry" (TR21), pp 230-31. Manuscript. Williamsburg: Special Collections, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library. Kelso states that "excavations at Bacon's Castle leave no doubt that part of the younger Allen's informal education included garden design." William M. Kelso, "Landscape Archaeology and Garden History Research: Success and Promise at Bacon's Castle, Monticello, and Poplar Forest, Virginia," in *Garden History: Issues, Approaches, Methods*, edited by John Dixon Hunt's (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Colloquium on the History of Landscape Architecture XIII, 1989): 31-58; Luccketti, *Archeological Survey of Bacon's Castle*, 4; Luccketti, *Archaeological Excavations at Bacon's Castle*, 1; Cary Carson, *Settlement Patterns and Vernacular Architecture in Seventeenth-Century Tidewater, Virginia* (M.A. thesis, University of Delaware, 1969):247-250.

³⁴² Kelly, *The Allens of Bacon's Castle*, 1; Luccketti, *Archaeological Excavations at Bacon's Castle*, 5.

well-thought-out consideration and development of an internal road network and a shift in the location of direct water access further towards the James. This shift occurred as the Allen landholdings expanded to accommodate acreage further afield, and the distance between crop and port, where shallow barges and sloops now traversed the marshy waters, connected the hogsheads of tobacco and other goods with the ships taking them on their long trip east.

Arthur Allen II inherited his father's house and property in 1670. The brick house was irreplaceable. Changing the iconic structure, already noteworthy in the seventeenth century, would be a significant waste of time and resources even for one of the wealthiest members of Virginia society. Elements of its style, while no longer novel by the later part of the century, held up well, elite merchant-planters emulating the diagonally-set chimney stacks well into the eighteenth century. But the changing social needs of an elite entertaining space, and the desire by new generations to put their stamp on their most prized possession, required changes of some kind. It is supposed that Arthur Allen II's primary option to elevate his prospects through his own mark was to change the setting of the manor house, complimenting it with an assembly of buildings (mentioned above) and other improvements which escaped the historical record. The most important of these, the large formal garden dated by archaeologists to the 1680s, escaped all reference in surviving documents.³⁴³

³⁴³ "Another example of diamond stacks exists in Virginia. Winona, a little brick story-and-loft dwelling in Northampton County on the Eastern Shore, has three of these shafts on one chimney." Henry Chandlee Forman, *The Architecture of the Old South, The Medieval Style 1585-1850* (Cambridge, 1948): 59. The author observed upon a visit to this remarkable house that there is evidence that it was once part of a larger building. While its location along the waterfront, bounded on two sides by now shallow and marshy creek tributaries, confines its setting, the building was once larger and to what extent is unknown as no archaeological research has been undertaken and no previous architectural historians have noted this curious detail. See Lucchetti, *Archaeological Excavations at Bacon's Castle*, 34-35, who dates many of the landscape changes at Bacon's Castle to

Extensive archaeological investigations conducted in the 1980s revealed a substantial formal garden linked with Arthur Allen II's ownership. As archaeologists recovered fragments of colonial bell jar glass from test excavations of the yard surrounding the house they identified through infra-red aerial photography a strange geometric pattern to the immediate southwest. Subsequent large-scale excavations identified the original design and layout of Virginia's earliest formal garden (adjacent its earliest surviving house), a massive 362 foot long and 192 foot wide design. The garden included eight principal planting beds arranged in two columns, the two northernmost measuring an oblong 80 feet by 20 feet, the four central beds measuring a substantial 74 feet by 98 feet, and the final two beds to the south measuring a slightly smaller 74 feet by 97 feet. Divided north-to-south by a twelve-foot-wide central path, east-west oriented, eight-foot-wide internal cross paths further divided the two columns of beds. A six-foot-wide perimeter path surrounded the group of planting beds, the north end including an enlarged ten-foot-wide path between the oblong beds and those to the south. The garden included a crown, the highest point along the north-south centerline, gradually descending to the east and west so as to well drain the planting beds. Along with considerations for sculpture and ornamentation, as evidenced by a potential pedestal hole between the northern oblong

the first quarter of the eighteenth century, a result of less than satisfying archaeological evidence that might preclude a tighter, earlier date. He explains that during this period the landscape, including the manor house underwent "changes that reflect a desire to alter an out-dated seventeenth century style house to a more fashionable dwelling consistent with emerging Georgian ideals. By the early eighteenth century, Bacon's Castle was no longer the only large brick house "on the block," thus construction of detached dependencies and alterations to the house were inaugurated to recoup the presumed loss of prestige. Increasing emphasis was placed on the front yard, with the development of a formal forecourt composed of matching advance buildings, such as can be seen at the Governor's Palace and Kingsmill Plantation, both of which were constructed about this time." James P. Whittenburg, *Looking for the Bacon's Castle Gardens* (Richmond, 1986).

beds, Allen II's garden fits within the stylish arrangement criteria of contemporary estates in England.³⁴⁴

The striking layout and the incorporation of distinct decorative elements that not only demonstrated a knowledge of English garden design, but also the proper care and maintenance of gardens (as seen in the bell jar glass), should not be surprising.³⁴⁵

Arthur Allen II received an education that provided him with the opportunity to experience gardens that incorporated these landscape features. His desire to exhibit these experiences as an outward communication of his knowledge and ability required only the wealth, labor, and aspiration for higher status that he clearly possessed. The period assigned for the garden's construction is squarely positioned following the damaging occupation during Bacon's Rebellion and Allen II's ascension to Speaker of the House of Burgesses (1686) and its construction might be seen as purposely coinciding with his achievement of this office.³⁴⁶

³⁴⁴ The archaeologists date the garden to the late seventeenth century (c. 1680) based on their understanding of a series of archaeological contexts, some related to site cleanup after the property was ransacked by Nathaniel Bacon (the rebel) and his men. An aborted well, filled in the years following the rebellion, predates and is stratigraphically "beneath" the garden, as are earlier landscape features including a ditch (clean of artifacts, but covered with soil and artifacts that date to that same period). In addition, there were a handful of Arthur Allen wine bottle seals, likely Arthur Allen II, found in association with early garden related features, including the white sand paths that cut through the series of raised soil beds that crowned the garden landscape. Luccketti adds, "Taken individually, no [single line of evidence] is overpowering, but in combination they point to a date of c. 1680-1690." see Nicholas Luccketti, *Bacon's Castle Archaeological Project IV: 1984 Garden Excavation Interim Report* (Richmond: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, 1985): 2, 11, 15, 35-36; Luccketti, *Archaeological Excavations at Bacon's Castle*, 4-5.

³⁴⁵ Luccketti explains that this evidence places the Allens within a distinct group of "sophisticated horticulturalists in the same vein as...George Washington and Philip Ludwell of Green Spring." Luccketti, *Bacon's Castle Archaeological Project IV*, 15.

³⁴⁶ The archaeologists avoid defining Arthur Allen II as exceptional for having a garden of such note, explaining that "one can safely assume that there were many seventeenth-century gardens in Virginia, yet they remain strangely silent in the records." The lack of reference might be attributed to the Arthur Allen II's property being far beyond the more frequently traveled areas of the lower peninsula and the plantations more closely situated along the James and York Rivers. This is not to downplay the role Arthur Allen II played in garden design in the colony, or his efforts at redefining his father's landscape as his own. Rather, it is an attempt to bring attention to the likely many other gardens that await discovery on other plantations of the elite merchant planters of Virginia whose investment in this area

Lewis Burwell II and Arthur Allen II shared in their generation's passion for brick manor houses, formal gardens, and complex plantation designs. These were but a handful of elements among many that united the two men, personally and within a group of elite merchant-planters. The extensive archaeological excavations on both plantations over the last three decades only add to this perceived exceptionality, providing a second level of comparison, elevating the status of both men and begging for additional consideration of the larger landscape extending out from "Allen's brick house." The differences between these two men, though, are equally fascinating, though.

As much as their personal histories ran parallel, resulting in certain shared experiences and membership within a small, unique group of late seventeenth-century Virginians, it is important to consider, when possible, the effects their conflicting decisions and divergent paths had on their plantation designs and their worldviews. Arthur Allen II received an English education and spent his formative years in an established, magnificent brick manor house that incorporated complex and sophisticated architectural details that bespoke his father's wealth, his family's knowledge, and his own future prospects. It was reflective of artisan mannerism and influenced other contemporary Virginia homes and churches, including those at Bruton parish in James City County and St. Luke's in Isle of Wight County with their "curvilinear gables, undulating surfaces of niches and projections, and free form use of classical elements." Arthur Allen II took a moral stand, withdrawing from Virginia

of landscape design were far more common and undoubtedly had an affect on Lewis Burwell II's garden at Fairfield (discussed in Chapter 5) which garnered but a single reference in William Byrd II's secret diary during a visit in 1709. Lucchetti, *Bacon's Castle Archaeological Project IV*, 7; Wright and Tinling, *The Secret Diary of William Byrd of Westover*.

politics at perhaps his greatest opportunity for sustained wealth and power, likely threatening his family's perpetual membership in the colony's elite, and costing himself the speakership and, potentially, a position on the Governor's Council. There is no evidence that Lewis Burwell II made similar sacrifices. His political ascension appears more gradual and his preference to focus on his role as gentleman merchant and planter, while in no way hindering the political possibilities of his descendants, may have emerged from an aversion to the political turmoil that Allen purposely escaped and that Burwell's step-father, Philip Ludwell I, appeared to invite.³⁴⁷

The many connections between Lewis Burwell II and Arthur Allen II beg the questions of how they influenced each other, how they shared ideas, successes, and failures, and how their personal experiences and the unique geographies of their home counties changed their outlook on the world around them. How did their attitudes on the purchase, use, and treatment of enslaved Africans differ? How did the design and use of their landscapes reflect these opinions that seldom, if ever, survive in contemporary documents? It is easy enough to assume that they visited each other's houses, experienced their remarkable landscapes, perhaps traded and shared seeds and plants while discussing the evolution of these buildings and spaces and the reasons behind their decisions to build, modify, or live within the plantations inherited from their father. The sharing of ideas, while not documented in a diary or other personal document, is understood as a given, a part of the everyday (or every month or year) experience of a member of Virginia's elite merchant planters. The evolution of these ideas, from seeing it, to doing it, to eventually teaching it (or inspiring others), is the greater reflection of a person's capabilities, interests, and the context of their life. A

³⁴⁷ Lounsbury, Personal Communication.

person's decisions are left in the historical, architectural, and archaeological record for others to decipher. Its significance exists in the effects these ideas and decisions had on their lives and the lives of others who visited or lived on these plantations.

These effects are not confined to these specific plantations. Each served as an influence on others, in some cases many others, and the strength of this influence is based on the individual circumstances and personal profile of the men who led these plantations. The design of a public building, such as a courthouse or a church, or a private building, such as a mill or store, might extend influence far beyond a merchant planter's house or the immediate surroundings of his plantation. Their legacies, specifically their political positions at the close of their lives, how they bequeathed their landscapes, ideas, and fortunes to their immediate descendants, further influenced the ways in which plantation design solidified the merchant-planter elite's hold on the colony's future and perpetuated their ideas that defined class and the development of racialized slavery.

John Carter II followed suit with his brother, Robert, in Lancaster County. Corotoman is known best as the plantation and manor house of Robert "King" Carter, Virginia's wealthiest merchant-planter in the first quarter of the eighteenth century. His magnificent plantation house, perhaps the pinnacle of early eighteenth-century architecture in the colony, forms the figurative bookend of the period of experimentation in early manor house and plantation design that defined the fifty-plus-year span beginning with Governor William Berkeley's Green Springs. As with many of its contemporaries, though, it emerged from a plantation complex established by the

preceding pioneering generation of merchant planters, in many cases a father, or brother. In this case, it was both.³⁴⁸

John Carter I, Robert's father, arrived in the colony in the 1630s from London and settled in Nansemond County, achieving the position of Colonel and representing the county in the House of Burgesses. John Carter moved to his recently patented lands in Lancaster County by 1653, realizing that the exhausted and relatively ill-suited soils of the Southside could not rival the agricultural potential of the virgin soils of the Northern Neck. The unfilled political positions resulting from the formation of the new county provided an opportunity by which he could enter immediately into prominent and potentially lucrative positions of leadership. John Carter I served as one of the first justices of the peace and one of the first burgesses representing Lancaster County. When he took a position on the Governor's Council, his eldest son, John Carter II, followed his father as burgess and the two managed one of the colony's largest estates, over 6,000 acres by the time of the elder Carter's death in 1669.³⁴⁹

³⁴⁸ Carter L. Hudgins, *The "King's" Realm: An Archaeological and Historical Analysis of Robert Carter's Corotoman* (Richmond: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, 1985): 53; see Louis B. Wright, *The First Gentlemen of Virginia* (Charlottesville, reprint 1964): 235-239; Louis B. Wright, *Letters of Robert Carter, 1720-1727, The Commercial Interests of a Virginia Gentleman* (San Marion, 1940); Robert A. Wheeler, *Lancaster County, Virginia, 1650-1750, The Evolution of a Southern Tidewater Community* (Ph.D. Dissertation, Brown University, 1972).

³⁴⁹ Hudgins, *The "King's" Realm*, 53; see also, Lorena S. Walsh and Russell R. Menard, "Death in the Chesapeake: Two Life Tables for Men in Early Colonial Maryland," in *Maryland Historical Magazine* XIX (1974): 211-227; Daniel Blake Smith, "Mortality and Family in the Colonial Chesapeake," in *Journal of Interdisciplinary Study* VIII (1978): 403-427; Kevin P. Kelly, "Economic and Social Development of Seventeenth Century Surry County, Virginia" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Washington, 1972); Robert A. Wheeler, *Lancaster County, Virginia, 1650-1750, The Evolution of a Southern Tidewater Community* (Ph.D. Dissertation, Brown University, 1972): 26, 51; H.R. McIlwaine, *Minutes of the Council and General Court of Colonial Virginia: 1622-1632, 1670-1676: With Notes and Excerpts from Original Council and General Court Records, into 1683, Now Lost* (Richmond, 1924): 484-490.

John Carter II proved particularly adept at managing and expanding his father's estate. As guardian of his younger half-brother, Robert, who was only six at his father's passing, John II took responsibility for managing his family's fortunes and valued his brother's future role as his father had his own. Sometime after 1670 Robert departed the colony for an education in England, the only suitable option acknowledging the difficulties in obtaining instruction "in the Latin school" or a similar elevated level, that his father had insisted his brother provide him. John Carter I's instructions included that John II find and hire a teacher "not only to teach him...but also to preserve him from harm and from doing evil...instructing him in the proper behavior of a man of elite status."³⁵⁰

Focusing on the management of his family's estate, and on the advancement of that fortune through his position in the colony, John Carter became commander of Lancaster's militia and added to the plantation's labor force and acreage, including distant quarters up the Rappahannock River, populated with increasing numbers of enslaved Africans. Among the first of his class to do so, John Carter II invested heavily in the practice of slavery. Robert returned to Virginia about 1685, bringing with him his education and additional experience as an apprentice to London merchants, which he applied to assisting his brother's management of the plantation. As his father and brother had before him, he assisted in the management of one of Virginia's largest estates, now extending to multiple counties and rivers. His marriage in 1688 completed the dual-household plantation where his own brick house, constructed alongside his brother's dwelling, represented the substantial wealth and

³⁵⁰ John sent his brother to England where he stayed at "old Mr. Bailey's" school until about 1685. Hudgins, *The "King's" Realm*, 55.

power of the Carter family. When John died two years later in 1690, he left his entire estate to Robert.³⁵¹

His brother's estate included every building Robert would need to succeed as a member of the elite in 1690. But Robert needed a landscape suited for the elite of the coming eighteenth century and, as an aspiring leader of that group, he would redefine the physical world of an elite merchant planter while expanding the estate his brother and father had left him. This is a discussion for the chapter that follows. At the administrative and formal center of his late seventeenth-century plantation, though, were two substantial buildings. His brother's c. 1680 home took the plan of a typical "Virginia house" with two rooms on the main floor, framed in timber, and typical of what Frenchman Durand de Dauphine observed in 1687 as "comfortably used" dwellings with wood shingled roof and a combination of interior wood paneling and plaster, "a coating of mortar made from oyster shells," all elevated over a brick foundation. The building measured 21 feet by 32 feet with an exterior chimney on the west gable. While not nearly as stark in contrast as Berkeley's or Allen's houses were to the more common Virginia houses of middling planters, the subtle improvements to John Carter II's house reflect an understanding of the environmental conditions of Tidewater Virginia and the expediency of building a familiar, but fine, house. It also revealed his focus on other elements of the plantation, such as investments in

³⁵¹ *ibid.*, 57; John Carter II's years at Corotoman are given scant attention by historians. His role in building the plantation is more significant than realized; see, no author, "Public Officers in Virginia, 1680" in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, (1894), 3: 250. The period of Robert Carter's absence from Corotoman can be determined from his absence in the records of the Lancaster County Court from December 14, 1670 to February 10, 168 when he witnessed a deposition his brother made to the court; John's widow contested Robert's legacy, and a final decision on the ownership of Corotoman was not made until 1693.

increasing the number of enslaved Africans and the substantial acreage they maintained in tobacco.³⁵²

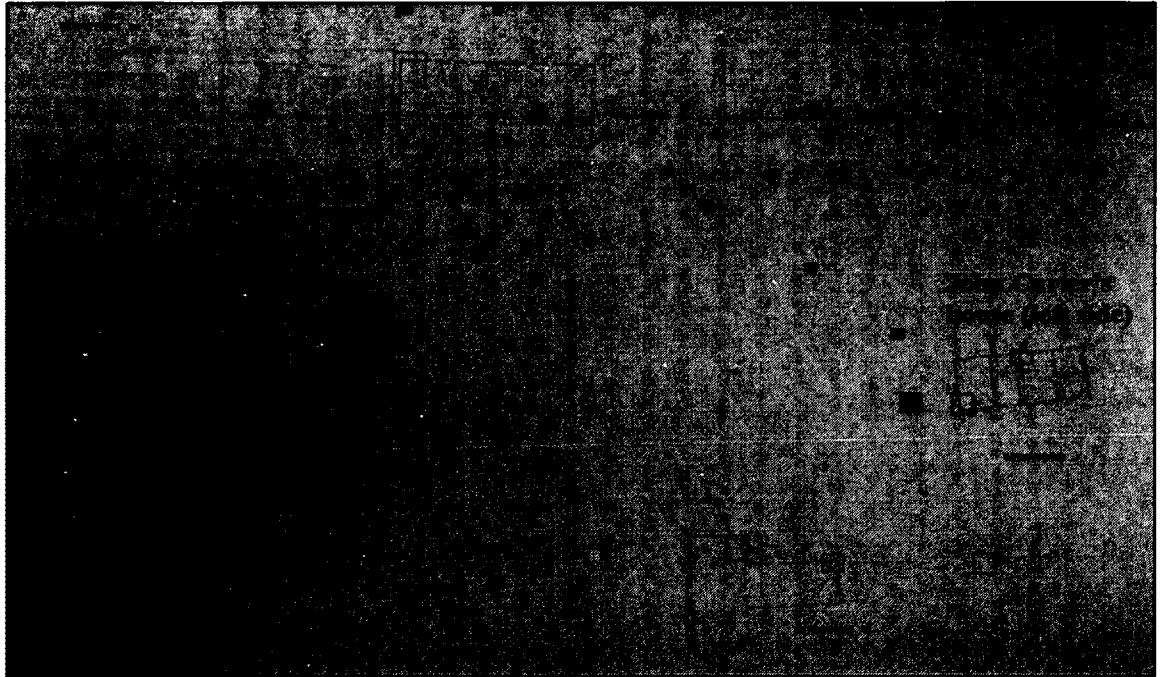
A single house with a brick foundation on a late seventeenth-century plantation was fairly rare; more than one was truly exceptional. Robert built a house adjacent his brother's shortly before his marriage. In contrast to John Carter II's residence, he built his entirely of brick, had a third, middle room (lobby) on two full floors and improved his brother's design by paving the first floor in stone. The 24 foot by 52 foot dwelling emerged from the knowledge, experience, and access to materials and craftsmen that came as a product of his brother's endeavors to expand Corotoman. Not only did Robert have a house by which to model his own (and improve it), he had an on-site store stocked with the architectural materials necessary to build it. Coupled with his own connections in England, his desires extended to the incorporation of stone, a design that ensured greater control over privacy and access to portions of the house, with new rooms that modified the purpose and function of traditional interiors spaces as individuals passed through them.³⁵³

A hybrid of the tried-and-true Virginia house and its cousins, including Arthur Allen I's brick house, Robert Carter's house fit within the confines of a shared landscape, respectful of his elder brother's position but responding to his own tastes. While neither the tallest or the largest house in the colony, his house (and his brother's) was sophisticated and appropriately embellished, typical of the residences

³⁵² This building was later doubled in size, c. 1820, and is frequently referred to by historians and architectural historians who visited the building in the early twentieth century before it was demolished (c. 1930) as the "Spinners or Spinster's" house; Hudgins, *The "King's" Realm*, 89; de Dauphine, *A Huguenot Exile in Virginia*, 119-120.

³⁵³ Robert Carter's house included exceptionally deep walls (2.5' below grade) that were two-bricks-wide, suggesting a two-story height. It was dismantled c. 1840. Hudgins, *The "King's" Realm*.

Robert Beverly classified as "improved" when he compared how Virginia's elite lived to their gentry brethren in London. As Carter Hudgins' analysis suggests, Robert Carter's house confidently communicated to his peers, or those "accustomed to reading the symbolic language houses spoke," as well as those beneath him, that he built his house to last, alongside his reputation and the status of his family.³⁵⁴



Building foundations identified during test excavations at Corotoman.
Hudgins, *Report on the 1977 Survey*, 18.

Lewis Burwell II's incorporation of a central passage into his own manor house in 1694 came from the successful utilization of this innovation by Robert Carter and his peers. Without knowing what additional architectural details Carter incorporated into his home, or what other landscape elements he included in this early plantation

³⁵⁴ *ibid.*, 92-93; For architectural details Carter grafted on to a new county court building for Lancaster County, see Lancaster County, Order Book IV (1676-1702): 199. See also, Carter Hudgins, *Report on the 1977 Survey of Corotoman Plantation* (Richmond, 1977): 3-18; Carter Hudgins, *The Miles Cary Archaeological Project* (Richmond, 1976); Fraser D. Neiman, "Domestic Architecture at the Clifts Plantation: The Social Context of Early Virginia Building" in *Northern Neck Historical Magazine* 28 (1978): 3096-3128.

arrangement, there is at least this one connection between the innovations at Fairfield and Robert Carter's first house. The Burwell and Carter families shared business and family ties throughout the seventeenth century, starting with Francis Carter, a relative of John Carter I, patenting the land that Lewis Burwell I would later incorporate into Fairfield. The most noteworthy connection between the two families would be the marriage between Nathaniel, Lewis Burwell II's eldest son, and Elizabeth, Robert Carter's eldest daughter. Discussed in greater detail in the chapter that follows, this marriage represented the strongest possible connection between the Burwells and Carters and formed as a result of their longstanding connections and mutual respect as leaders of the colony.³⁵⁵

Robert followed the same political course as his father and brother, serving as a Justice of the Peace for Lancaster County and as Burgess for Lancaster County (1691) at the age of twenty-eight. Eight years later he ascended to the Council of State where he served for the remainder of his life, presiding over it from 1726 until his death in 1732. During this period he assembled numerous lucrative political appointments, including Naval Officer for the Rappahannock River District, ferryman, Secretary of State, Auditor-General, and Treasurer for Virginia. His most important position, though, was agent for the Fairfax family, the hereditary proprietors of Virginia's expansive Northern Neck (1702-1711 and 1722-1732). This position entitled him to a percentage of the quitrents and allowed for his easily granting himself more than 110,000 acres of land. While the perfect position for a land speculator, Carter's interests always extended to agriculture. As a prominent planter of the late

³⁵⁵ Mark R. Wenger, "The Central Passage in Virginia: Evolution of an Eighteenth-Century Living Space," in *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture, II*, edited by Camille Wells (Columbia, 1986): 137-149.

seventeenth/early eighteenth century he realized that successful tobacco production required large amounts of virgin soil and enslaved Africans. Robert Carter's 34 tithables in 1691 represented the largest labor force in Lancaster County, and by 1715 he owned 44 percent of all tithables taxed in the county. Five years later he paid for 135 tithables. As one of Virginia's wealthiest men by the end of the seventeenth century, he secured his position in society and his family's fortunes for generations to come. His pursuit of wealth, in amounts increasingly beyond his needs, and his position in colonial society, seen through his Corotoman landscape, formed the core of his identity.³⁵⁶

Robert Carter's experiences offer significant insight into this emerging class of late seventeenth-century elite merchant planters. Carter Hudgins' study of Carter and his contemporaries leads him to believe that, whether in quality, quantity, the image of endless tobacco fields, or the scene of so much work committed to the crop, tobacco represented the true measure of wealth. He adds that "the image a planter cast among his neighbors was determined, in large part, by the reputation of his crops." The dedication of Carter to his crops, as his primary source of wealth and the most direct way to communicate his identity, is seen in his work ethic and his commitment to improving and expanding his labor force. He expected his peers to believe what he believed - that a planter must work to improve the material things that God gave. It was the only direct path to happiness. Each year must exceed expectations. Whether

³⁵⁶ Hudgins, *The "King's" Realm*, 57, 58, 59; Robert Carter to William Dawkins, 23 February 1720, Wright, *Letters of Robert Carter*, xii, 81; Hudgins writes "For a year Carter acted as the colony's governor, an honor actively sought but regularly denied his friend William Byrd." For Robert Carter's taking the oath as a Justice of the Peace see Lancaster County, Order Book III (1686-1696): 166; Louis Morton, *Robert Carter of Nomini Hall, A Tobacco Planter of the Eighteenth Century* (Williamsburg, 1941): 82; Most were slaves. Carter's Tithes were extracted from Lancaster County Court Order Books III, IV, and V; the figures for 1715 are from Wertenbaker, *The Planters of Colonial Virginia*, 151.

motivated by greed, a need for security, the freedom that comes from simple aggrandizement, or the satisfaction of competing against (and defeating) his peers and neighbors of all classes, he looked to his own goals based on a "divine standard" to justify his pursuits." Carter Hudgins writes that when Robert Carter "was asked why rich men should grow richer" Carter gladly explained "we are but stewards of God's building: the more He lends us the larger He expects from us, and happy they that make a right use of their Master's talents." His competitive nature, while at the core of his personal beliefs, did not gain him many friends. Hudgins adds, "His contemporaries sniped at the most exaggerated of his traits, but he and the image of his crops withstood all assaults." It was the sin of excessive pride, more than any others, that painted his public image - for which he was "in contempt...sometimes called 'King' Carter...even to his face" - despite any of his efforts to the contrary. It may be safe to assume that Lewis Burwell II more tactfully navigated the world of neighborly politics, although success within the elite merchant planter class assumed a certain degree of elevated ego and self-confidence.³⁵⁷

Considering his high intelligence and discipline, two traits Carter apparently held in abundance, success was nearly predetermined. Carter's personal letters testify to his diligent attention to agricultural and commercial endeavors, respecting the vagaries of the trans-Atlantic market and illustrating his adjustments to the evolving demographics of the colony's workforce. He continued near daily conversations with his overseers, composed letters to merchants in London, and otherwise maintained direct connections with the whole of plantation society, from top to bottom. Carter

³⁵⁷ Hudgins, *The "King's" Realm*, 57, 62-63, 66, 70; Robert Carter to William Dawkins, 23 February 1720, Wright, *Letters of Robert Carter*, 81.

Hudgins views this multi-level interaction intersecting alongside three distinct and changing cultures, each requiring a unique language and an adjustment of worldview. One could consider these essential elements of three different but overlapping landscapes.

An effective plantation owner recognized, either consciously or subconsciously, that enslaved Africans, white middling freemen, and English merchants viewed the world differently. And while Carter's interests remained as the primary concerns and viewpoint from his perspective, his involvement required tacit acknowledgement of the complexities of their lives. Hudgins explains that "the presumptions he brought with him to each exchange...differed...unseen, a set of mental rules, anthropologists call them a kind of grammar of communications, was at work and allowed Carter to converse, intelligibly, with each group."³⁵⁸ Carter's pursuit of wealth, prestige, and power through his interests in tobacco required his communicating in many "languages" to many cultures. At the center of his world, and the core of his identity, existed the plantation landscape which communicated who he was to others, not through words, but through the built landscape and plantation design.

Robert Carter acknowledged that his wealth, and that of his peers, might have a debilitating effect on their moral character and negatively influence future generations while disconnecting them with the lessons of the past. Hudgins writes that "Carter feared that by shifting away from traditional ways of building a house and furnishing it he and his wealthy neighbors risked succumbing to a love of luxury that might eventually prove fatal to their moral virtue." But, just as with prior generations, new

³⁵⁸ Hudgins, *The "King's" Realm*, 51-52.

styles in building and fashion legitimized their positions in society, making clear the differences between themselves and those beneath them. This became evermore necessary after Bacon's Rebellion, the tobacco riots of 1682, and with an increasing number of enslaved Africans in the colony. House construction and plantation design, he would agree, served to reflect the changing perspectives of the elite, and those who wished to emulate them, towards those beneath them, guiding social interactions between perceived superiors and inferiors. As this level of communication became more common and was accepted as the language of a more unified and prosperous colony, the elite literally built their position in brick on the backs of the enslaved Africans whom they had purchased with tobacco profits.³⁵⁹

The merchant-planter elite aspired to new heights at the end of the seventeenth century, attempting to actively differentiate themselves from those beneath them and to compete with those of shared social status. These aspirations required direction, and Lewis Burwell II, Robert Carter, and a handful of contemporaries became early arbiters of taste within the colony. They employed their interpretations of English and European architectural trends witnessed, in the latter's case, during time outside of Virginia and, in both cases, tempered by lifetimes inside the colony. At the core of any architectural philosophy is a philosophical perspective, one that guides behavior within the spaces created by the buildings and accompanying landscape of a new estate, or, in the case of Virginia, a new plantation. The late seventeenth century witnessed the introduction of an enlightened world view that man, as the paramount

³⁵⁹ *ibid.*, 9-10, 73.

being within the corporeal world, should control nature in all its forms.³⁶⁰ Witnessed in the building boom of the second quarter of the eighteenth century, the use of a consistent architectural grammar that grew out of the experimentation during the latter part of the prior century reflected a settling of the world view among the elite, a confidence which bespoke the established order set forth by that preceding generation. A dramatic increase in brick construction, plantation design, and the number of ancillary buildings that would compliment the manor house coincided with the seating of new plantations as many of Virginia's gentlemen grappled with how best to distinguish themselves from the preceding generation without abandoning their connection with the past and the legitimacy to rule that came with it.³⁶¹

Lewis Burwell II was among the leaders of his class, a pioneer in the expansion of plantation design sprouting from the economic, political, and social developments of this time. His plantation, among few others, played a prominent role in establishing the prominence of the late seventeenth-century elite merchant planters as the natural leaders of the colony, helping define the role of the elite and their position in Virginia society for the next century. Changes in plantation design spread through the Chesapeake and affected the lives of both the free and the enslaved. It helped usher in and legitimize a new perspective of slavery. The expansion of the plantation design, its emulation, and subsequent innovations, extended its power across each property and served to legitimize through the perceived control of the

³⁶⁰ *ibid.*, 79-80; Alan Gowans, *Images of American Living: Four Centuries of Architecture and Furniture as Cultural Expression* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1964): 116-117.

³⁶¹ Hudgins, *The "King's" Realm*, 78-79; see Richard Beale Davis, *Intellectual Life in the Colonial South, 1585-1763* (Knoxville, 1978): 1121, 1146-1147; Hudgins adds that Sir Henry Wotton could say flatly in the introduction to his *The Elements of Architecture* (London, 1624) that he need not explain why stylish architecture was hotly pursued, but historians cannot assume that they know the reasons that was so.

physical world the power and control over the enslaved Africans, the poorer settlers, and the natural environment far beyond the bounds of their plantations.

The ideas each of these men put into action announced their commitment to certain ideals that defined their class, their position within that class, their aspirations, and their identity. A person's identity and worldview are significantly influenced by constant interactions with their physical surroundings. How they lived within and modified their world reveals how they saw themselves and how others viewed them. The elite changed the layout and appearance of their homes and plantations to distance themselves physically and symbolically from poorer whites and enslaved Africans. This is apparent in the rise in popularity of brick construction, despite the scarcity of skilled workmen and the enormous expense involved in building large scale manor homes. Consider the implementation of fashionable design features accessible solely to the elite with no apparent consideration of climate conditions. Nearly a century of European settlement had proven how unnecessary construction in brick was; it was old hat, a familiar material. And yet its popularity continued to rise, not simply because it was rare, or because it symbolized permanence or a stronger connection to England.

This process was equally reflected in the interior division of rooms and creation of new functions for these often larger spaces. Greater security through further limiting access was essential, as was a greater attention to the view outward from the manor house, a point of surveillance of those activities taking place within sight while also a venue for the appreciation of the designed landscape . The incorporation of these elements was also reflected on the home's exterior. The increase in the number and size of windows, the orientation of buildings to their

surroundings, and the expansion of houses upwards, to the second and even third story – each of these changes reflect the struggle to communicate identity and control the world around them through the manipulation of landscape.

This is significant in the late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century Chesapeake because of the generational change in leadership and attitudes towards material displays of wealth and status. As a prominent example, the use of brick in house construction by anyone other than the elite colonial families comes early within the emerging consumer revolution that would dominate both the material world and redefine how the people communicated their identity. The consumer revolution, in its earlier but noticeable stage of development in late seventeenth-century Virginia, marks a point at which emulation took hold across class levels as a prominent act of social identification. Status was no longer confirmed solely through family name; with such a short genealogy of established Virginia families, few could expect tradition and memory alone to legitimize the class structure expected of an English society. And the society was no longer exclusively “English.” Virginia was populated by small, but notable, groups of non-English immigrants, Virginia Indians who survived the conflicts of early settlement, and ever-increasing numbers of enslaved Africans, within themselves constituted from a variety of cultural groups, who further complicated the difficult to describe look of Virginia’s population. And with a continued influx, although reduced to some extent from the immigration rates earlier in the century, of middling planters and yeomen, it was a virtual mixing bowl of strangers with different lifestyles and languages who interpreted the colonial environment, both literally and figuratively, in very different ways.

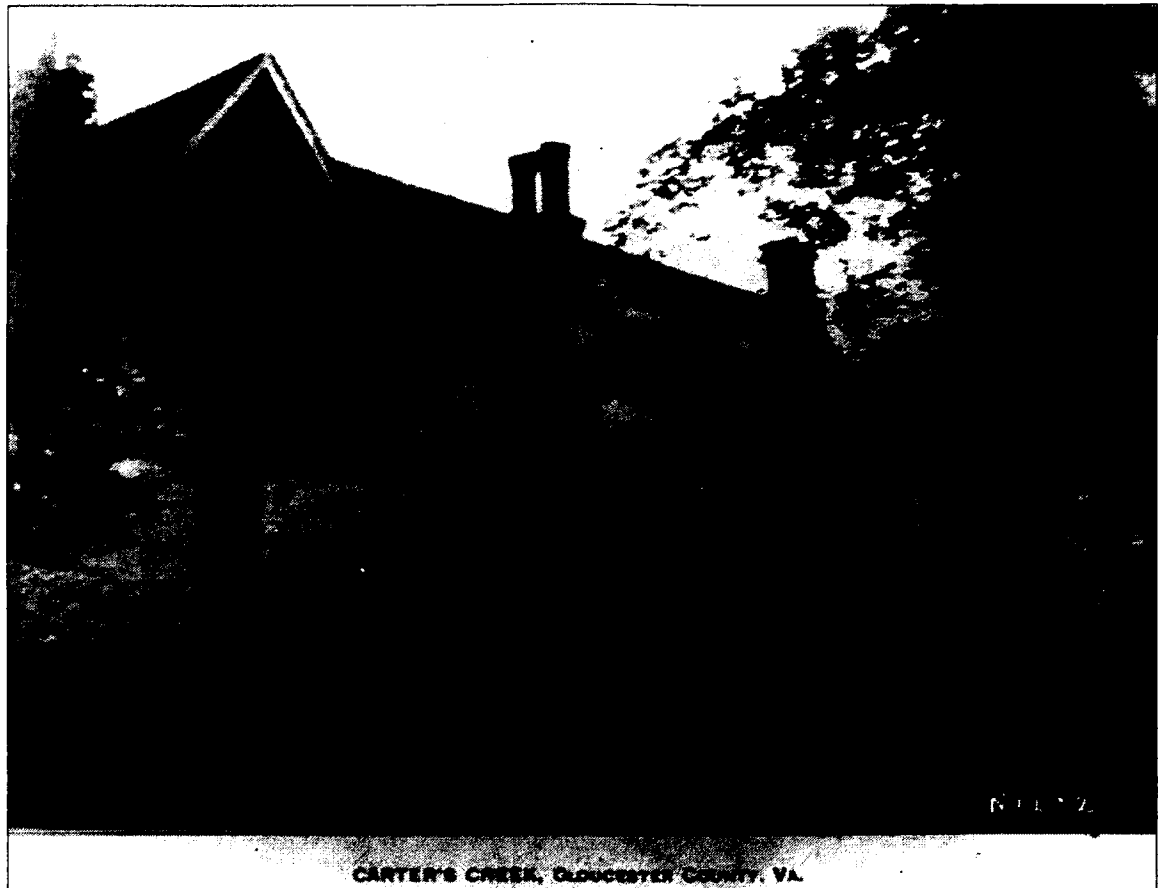
Sharing the voyage to late seventeenth-century Virginia were the experiences and ideas that influenced known designs for important buildings and landscapes across North America. While the possibility exists that architectural and technical treatises made the trip as well, such as Joseph Moxon's *Mechanick Exercises*, a series of pamphlets published in 1670, three of which focus on house carpentry, included how-to guides oriented towards the practical arts ranging from brick manufacture to building layout and framing, it is more likely that the concepts espoused in these books came to Virginia contained within the minds of experienced craftsmen contracted to help design and build these plantations.³⁶²

The struggle to legitimize the position of one's family through architecture, landscape, and material culture would initially conflict with the requirements of comfortable living in the very non-England environment of the Chesapeake Bay. With adaptation and emulation grew a distinctly regional approach that set precedent for the families of Virginia's ruling class through the eighteenth century. Just as Lewis Burwell II grappled with the conflicting pressure of how best to exhibit a fine manor house worthy of the colony's most powerful family with the need to expand the operation of one of its most profitable plantations, his contemporaries considered the same dilemma. Elements of Lewis Burwell II's landscape at Fairfield are visible in the

³⁶² Other potential reference works that might have influenced Burwell's contractors, other skilled craftsmen, or recent immigrant peers include John Darling's *Carpenter's Rule Made Easie* (1658), Godfrey Richards' translation of the first book of Palladio's *Quattro libri dell'architettura* (1663) which included a supplement on windows and doors by Pierre Le Muet, a French architect, and Vitruvius (1649 Amsterdam edition). See Park, *A List of Architectural Books*, 2, 7. See also Janice G. Schimmelman, *Architectural Books in Early America: Architectural Treatises and Building Handbooks in American Libraries and Bookstores through 1800* (New Castle, 1999). Richards' translation went into a second edition in 1668, two years after the great fire. Park writes that "such translations or native English instructions continued to appear at intervals until a fresh impetus was provided in 1715 by the Earl of Burlington" who paid for the creation and publication of Colen Campbell's *Virtruvius Britannicus* "a monumental three-volume folio with plates of 'classical' buildings by Jones, Webb, Wren, Vanbrugh, and Campbell himself."

plantations of his peers and in the developing formal urban, political, and religious spaces that emerged during the first half of the eighteenth century. The chapter that follows, which concludes this dissertation, considers how Lewis Burwell II's contemporaries and the generation of planters that followed, in this case, descendants of Lewis Burwell II, incorporated the lessons learned in their own plantations, including Fairfield.

Chapter 7: Those that came after...



West elevation of the Fairfield manor house, c. 1890.
The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, Virginia.

The emergence of a designed plantation landscape in Virginia at the end of the seventeenth century coincided with the development of slavery as an exclusively black condition. Whether intentional or not, a generation of late seventeenth-century elite merchant planters helped put this path in motion through the elements of their plantation designs, including the construction of manor houses, a reliance on an ever-increasing number of enslaved Africans for agricultural profit, and the desire to maintain their position in society through a competitive demonstration of their sophistication and knowledge via landscape. They assembled such wealth and landed

estates that their economic and political success would inspire many generations to emulate their efforts. They are responsible for defining the culture of eighteenth-century Virginia gentry and significantly affected the futures of hundreds of thousands of enslaved Africans imported into the colony.

The elite merchant planters of the late seventeenth century mastered and worked to expand and legitimize the political, economic, and social systems built on profiting from the labor of enslaved Africans. Tobacco may have been the spark, but slavery fueled the fire and greed gave it meaning. As the eighteenth century progressed, the elite merchant-planters grappled with how to achieve and exceed the wealth of their fathers and how to sustain the life they grew up in (or grew into). And while their responses to changes in the world helped facilitate the development of the plantation system, the world would not stop changing, forcing them to further evolve alongside it. The designed plantations of the late seventeenth/early eighteenth century are remarkable simply because their study might illuminate the condition of colonial culture at a crucial period in its development. The challenge is to understand how the plantation design of Lewis Burwell II's era influenced subsequent generations, noting that each period evolved in response to their own conditions.

The plantation landscape of the mid-eighteenth century is far more researched than its preceding era. It is certainly better documented, through architectural analysis of standing buildings and landscape elements, archaeological research, and historical research. The surviving fabric of buildings, fields, and road networks constructed during that period are more numerous and survive in less altered form than their

predecessors. This fabric is not immune to the influence of subsequent generations' modifications, or in how others used and changed these landscapes. There are more surviving elements, though, that more closely represent the eighteenth-century plantations and parallel examples in contemporary book illustrations and surviving buildings in Europe and in other colonies. The popularity of these examples in recent publications often form the basis for the public's understanding of pre-Revolutionary War Virginia and the plantation landscape, a *de facto* reflection of the entire colonial period.

This is problematic for many reasons. When it is seen as the pinnacle of affluent design and practice among the era's most important families it gives a static and false sense of time that fails to address experimentation and innovation in design and construction during this near-170-year period. It also leaves the public with an inaccurate picture of the lives of enslaved Africans, assuming they are addressed. The slavery understood by white property owners and enslaved Africans of the mid-seventeenth century differed significantly from the slavery of the mid-eighteenth century. The dominant image of slavery, though, is the plantation house, situated high atop the hill with the slave quarters, dependencies, terraced gardens and endless tobacco fields flowing downward to the riverbank where the ships dropped off the enslaved Africans and other cargo and reload with hogsheads for the long journey to England.

This image is one that the Virginia gentry intended others to appreciate, to see as the fruits of their labor, and the goal that other planters attempt to achieve. So enchanted by the power of this imagery and the tremendous wealth acquired by their

fathers and grandfathers, the early eighteenth-century elite merchant planter focused every action on profit and connecting their success with that of their ancestors. History, they hoped, would bring further legitimacy to their position in society. It bred acceptance, in their eyes, of their actions as reasonable and acceptable, maintaining the status quo, the sense of stability that might allow every planter to envision success over time. The continued existence of this image feeds a narrative that obscures the deeper, richer history of interaction between white planters, enslaved Africans, and the natural environment, among other elements of Virginia's complex history. But the problem with adding to this discussion and confronting our incomplete understanding (and presentation) of the past is the same problem encountered in many other areas of Virginia's history. Put simply, we have much more to learn.

The period of focus for this dissertation falls between two of the most significant periods in American history: colonization and the American Revolution. In between these important events is over one hundred and fifty years, a period that includes the expansion of European settlement across the colony, the development of a non-English culture that resulted from generations of contact and adaptation between Virginia Indians, enslaved Africans, and European immigrants, and, most importantly, the development of racialized slavery. It is within this significant period that the merchant-planter elite developed massive designed plantations and sought to legitimize their position in society and formalize the social and racial hierarchy through the manipulation of landscape. A significant chapter in the history of the colony, it remains a poorly understood one. Ultimately, understanding these landscapes and the people behind and within them is a reflection of the current era, the

priorities of its scholars when looking at the past and how it reflects on the present. This will be discussed in the epilogue that follows.

There are methods useful for avoiding the pitfalls and inadequacies of researching plantation landscapes. The research on Fairfield plantation is an imperfect case in point, particularly when considering the transition from the initial period of plantation landscape design (Lewis Burwell II) to subsequent generations. Quite conveniently, archaeologists excavated substantial portions of the early-to-mid-eighteenth-century plantations of Lewis Burwell II's descendants. References to generations of owners and enslaved Africans that followed those of the late seventeenth century are more numerous and provide a fuller understanding of the transmission of ideas, particularly for plantation design, not only from one generation to the next, but in a direct line within one family. The hope is that, through the contextualization of landscape within the chronology of prior and contemporary plantations (Chapter 6) and their descendants (this chapter), it will be possible to better understand the influence of the design of Fairfield plantation and the legacy of its owners and enslaved population on other plantations in colonial Virginia.

The plantations under consideration in this chapter include Kingsmill, home of Lewis Burwell II's youngest son, Lewis Burwell III; Fairfield, during both the ownership of Lewis Burwell II's oldest son, Nathaniel, and Nathaniel's oldest son, Lewis Burwell I/II; and Carter's Grove, home of Nathaniel's second oldest son, Carter. There are many plantations of the early-to-mid-eighteenth century which could be included here, including the Governor's Palace, the Page family home at Rosewell in Gloucester County, and Shirley plantation in Charles City County to name but a few.

It is noteworthy that such a tremendous number of comparative examples exist for this period, compared to those of the late seventeenth century, further highlighting the difficulties of research into that time and the explosion of manor house construction (and survival) that marked the 1720s through 1750s in Virginia.

The intent of this chapter, though, is to focus on the transmittal of ideas specifically among persons known to have a direct association between properties. There is no more certain connection that fits these criteria than family and the influence of upbringing and its reflection on adulthood, character, and identity. There are other family plantations worth considering, including King's Creek, home to Nathaniel Bacon the Elder, Lewis Burwell II (after 1701 until his death in 1710), and James (Jimmy) Burwell (Lewis Burwell II's middle son), as well as the plantation at Burwell's Bay in Isle of Wight County, home to Nathaniel Burwell's third eldest son, Robert (Robin). This last group of plantations is understudied, though, and provide only tangential comparable information, although they may hold the answers to some of the questions proposed in this chapter. The exception to this approach, though, is Robert Carter's plantation, Corotoman. While earlier iterations of this plantation were discussed in Chapter 6, Carter's construction of a massive new plantation house beginning in 1720 made such a significant contribution to the architecture of colonial Virginia that it bears addressing here. Carter's role as advisor and role model, grandfather and great-grandfather, to the Burwells of this chapter only adds to his influence, specifically on these landscapes.

Lewis Burwell II left his manor house, many of his slaves, and the entirety of his family's ancestral home in Virginia to his son, Nathaniel, only a few years into the eighteenth century. Perhaps when Nathaniel reached majority in 1697, or as a wedding gift when Elizabeth Carter joined their family, the plantation was surely under Nathaniel's control by 1708. Along with Nathaniel's brother, James, his half brother, Lewis III, and his step-brother, William Cole II, Lewis Burwell II took up residence at King's Creek, the late seventeenth-century manor house of his uncle-in-law, Nathaniel Bacon the Elder. His departure from Fairfield plantation marked both a transition in his and his son's lives. Lewis Burwell II no longer needed a grand design statement or the construction of a new manor house and designed plantation to demonstrate his position in society; his initials high upon the brick chimney of his brick house in Gloucester County would testify to that achievement for generations to come. Rather, his move to King's Creek plantation came along with the same symbolic and literal association with established power and prominence, continuing his role as successor to Nathaniel Bacon's legacy, while providing a more convenient headquarters for his greater role in politics, society, and town planning - a product of his successful building campaigns and plantation design at Fairfield.³⁶³

Lewis Burwell II's ascendance to the Governor's Council in 1699, his appointment to the Board of the College of William and Mary, and role as a feoffee of the new city of Williamsburg greatly expanded his responsibilities beyond his home

³⁶³ The exact year of Nathaniel's marriage to Elizabeth Carter, eldest daughter of Robert "King" Carter is unknown. The year 1708 is reasonable based on the birth of their children and the move of his father, Lewis Burwell II, across the York River to King's Creek. There is also a reference in February, 1708 that the Governor's Council wrote of Nathaniel Burwell "a person fitly qualified" to execute the position of Naval Officer of York River" and he was sworn in a month later on March 1st after giving bond with his father and "father-in-law." Blair, *The Rise of the Burwells*, 33, 50, n55.

plantation. His struggles to remove himself from the Governor's Council, perhaps to focus his energies on these other ventures as he fought off sickness and age-related infirmities, suggest a desire to spend time on the occupations he enjoyed even if others might prove more profitable. Retirement to Bacon's estate may have been an ideal conclusion to a life spent climbing the political and social ladder. Having reached his pinnacle, he left his son, Nathaniel, and his other children in the best possible position to succeed him.

Lewis Burwell II's children would meet and exceed their father's expectations, politically, economically, and in the plantations they designed and implemented. Just as his father's power and influence reached its peak, Nathaniel's position in colonial society followed swiftly in his wake. As his political and social role increased, he inherited the family's primary plantation, connecting him directly to the symbols of wealth and influence that would serve him in the years to come. But it was a testament to his father's accomplishments more than his own. His father's success cast a tall shadow across more than just the neighboring quarters and fields. To escape this cloud, Nathaniel changed the remarkable plantation he inherited into something recognizably his own.

His father's early life is nearly incomparable to Nathaniel's. Nathaniel enjoyed a relatively stable childhood, benefitting from his family's increasing wealth, witnessing the landscape change and his future role in politics and society unfold without waiting for his father's death. His marriage to Elizabeth Carter, its likely sizeable dower, and his education under the tutelage of his father, raised expectations for even grander accomplishments. He focused his early efforts as manager of the

plantation on the development of the manor house, with little to no evidence of his entering politics until near the time of his father's passing. It appears that Nathaniel initially served as steward, a skilled hand that would keep this ship steady for as long as necessary - his father's watchful eye only a short distance across the York River, nearly within sight of the house he built.³⁶⁴

Inheriting control, rather than ownership, instilled a sense of responsibility with limited freedoms. Nathaniel's marriage and the accompanying dower provided the necessary funds to expand the manor house and update the surrounding area to reflect his own preferences, his own identity. It is difficult to know for certain, though, whether he sought to modify his father's designs immediately, including perhaps the transition of the manor house from a centerpiece of entertainment to a combined primary residence and social space. Archaeological evidence suggests that the construction of an extension to the building's south wing occurred during Nathaniel's lifetime. The details he incorporated into this addition indicate grander ambitions than simply adding space for an expanding family. Barely a decade after the construction of the manor house, Nathaniel embarked on a project to reshape his father's landscape towards a new vision. A prelude of things to come.

Across the York River, Lewis Burwell II entertained guests and developed the Kings Creek plantation for his younger son, James, or "Jimmy" as he was often known. Only a few years younger than Nathaniel, Jimmy likely took control of the plantation's day-to-day management while his father traveled back and forth to

³⁶⁴ Nathaniel Burwell's earliest reference in surviving historic documents include witnessing a deed of gift between his father and step mother, Martha Lear Cole, and Dudley Diggs of Warwick County on 24 February, 1700/1 and his first patent of land, a 600-acre parcel in King and Queen County on October 28, 1703; see YCDOW, XI: 409; Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, Volume 9, 61.

Williamsburg and to his children's plantations, including his daughter Joanna's Eltham plantation in New Kent County and his daughter Lucy's Barn Elms plantation in Middlesex County. Both of their husbands continued frequent business transactions with their father-in-law and Lewis Burwell II appears to have enjoyed his status as a revered elder planter and merchant, the frequent subject of visits by planters from across the region. A second wind, of sorts, kept him active with local politics in York County and his frequent appearance in the court records document his presence beyond his plantation throughout the first ten years of the eighteenth century. But failing health marked the final year of this decade and he died on December 19, 1710 in the 61st year of his life. William Byrd II documented the final days of Lewis's life, remaining nearby as Burwell's health declined. He found himself enlisted by Lewis Burwell II to act as mediator in case his sons might bicker or battle over the dissolution of his estate. Byrd accepted his friend's request and comforted him as Burwell was "apprehensive of dying and desired extremely to live a little longer." Burwell died shortly thereafter.³⁶⁵

The loss of Lewis Burwell II did little to diminish the power of the family. During the decade that followed, his descendants, their husbands and their wives, epitomized the gentry family in colonial Virginia. Every political decision, every fine collected, and every social occasion felt as if the Burwell family had a hand to play. This is symbolized best by the two occasions when governors remarked how nearly completely this family dominated Virginia politics. Governor Spotswood complained in 1713 that "the greater part of the present Council are related to the Family of Burwells; if Mr. Bassett and Mr. Berkeley should take their places there will be no less

³⁶⁵ Wright and Tinling, *The Secret Diary of William Byrd*, 270.

than seven so near related that they will go off the Bench whenever a Cause of the Burwells come to be tryed.” Governor Spotswood wrote again in 1714 to the Lords Commissioners of trade:

People of Virginia are not well pleas’d when they see so many of one Family on the Gen’l Court Bench, and I fear y’r Lo’ps may be troubled with a Greivance from them on that Acc’t, if the Merchant’s Scheme, (which I have seen,) should take place, it being propos’d to add to the Council three more who are nearly related to many of the same Family already on that Board.³⁶⁶

Nathaniel Burwell operated as the leader of this group, although he appears to have taken an understated role in the same way as his father. His rise to political prominence included lucrative appointments as Naval Officer of the York River and justice of the peace for Gloucester County, along with the likely position of vestryman. He joined a delegation of Virginia planters who ventured to England to discuss the sharing of tobacco technology with Russia and, along with merchants Micajah and Richard Perry and 63 others, Burwell added the Virginia perspective to this debate over proprietary agriculture while, on the side, spent time persuading members of the King’s Court to recall Governor Francis Nicholson.

Nathaniel Burwell’s influence grew in the years after his father’s passing as he expanded his landholdings and joined the House of Burgesses in 1710 for Jamestown, having taken possession of his great uncle’s lot on the island (although his primary residence was still at Fairfield). He was appointed to the Committee for Propositions and Grievances. His political rise continued in 1716 with his appointment to the Board of the College of William and Mary. But Nathaniel could not benefit from the long

³⁶⁶ R.A. Brock, comp., *The Official Letters of Alexander Spotswood, Lieutenant-Governor of the Colony of Virginia, 1710-1722* (Richmond, 1882-85): 77-78; This was also mentioned by Robins, who wrote “So powerful and influential were they in Virginia that no less a personage than Governor Alexander Spotswood complained that the Council embraced too many Burwells” including the Spotswood quote; Robins, “The Story of the Removal of the Burwell Tombs.”

life his father enjoyed. Barely a decade after his father's passing, and without any of his six children reaching majority, he died at his home at Fairfield in 1721. Within the context of a relatively short life of forty-two years, perhaps what set him apart from his peers were his modifications to his father's manor house and the plantation he inherited.³⁶⁷

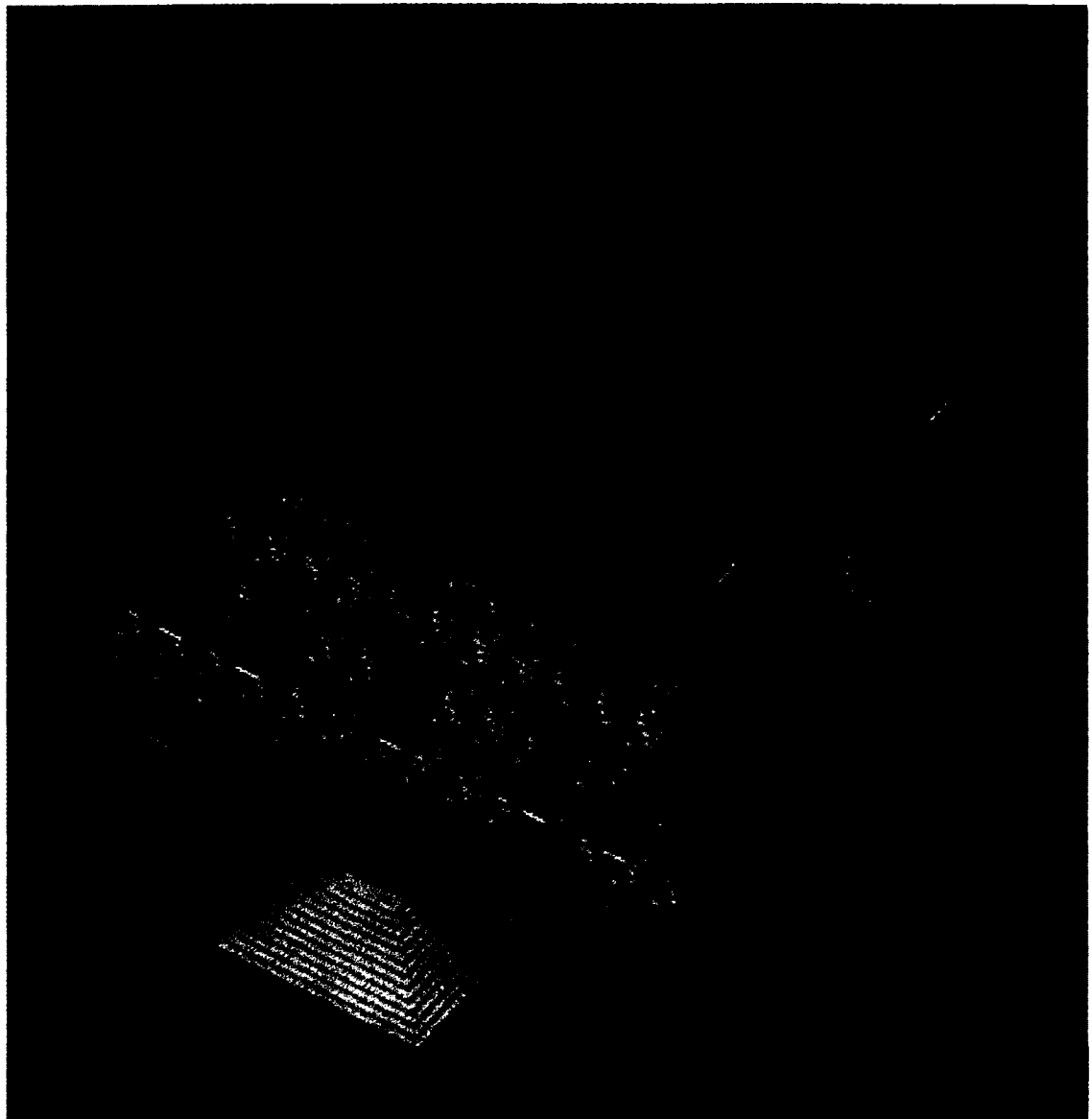
The first generation to succeed the original builders of these magnificent manor houses rarely rebuilt them entirely, but rather added to or adapted their father's construction. Architectural historian Camille Wells' work tracks the frequency of these changes among gentry families to one or two periods within a single ownership. Marriage, inheritance, the purchase of new land and other social and economic factors are often seen as triggers for new construction. In addition, cataclysmic events, such as a house fire, hurricane, or other disaster can necessitate a significant and extensive redesign. While the lens of history may seem to reflect a swift and sudden response, the resulting changes are far more often carefully planned and implemented strategies that develop over a series of years. For instance, a member of the merchant-planter elite might consider building new slave quarters or moving older quarter to new locations, tearing them down or repurposing older buildings; the plantation's infrastructure evolved as its population and agricultural endeavors expanded. In the case of Nathaniel Burwell and his efforts at Fairfield, it was during his management of

³⁶⁷ On February 18, 1708, the Governor's Council records read that Nathaniel Burwell was "a person fitly qualified" to execute the position of Naval Officer of York River" and was sworn in a month later on March 1st after giving bond with his father and father-in-law; H.R. McIlwaine, ed., *Executive Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia* (Richmond, 1925-1945), III: 207; 212. Susan M. Kingsbury, ed., *The Records of the Virginia Company of London*, Volume IV (Washington, D.C., 1906): 119-120, 525; McIlwaine, *Executive Journals*, Volume III, 215; no author, "Tobacco Trade in Russia, 1705" in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 2nd Series, 3 (1923), 4: 250-258; Mason, *Records of Colonial Gloucester County*, Volume I; Blair, *The Rise of the Burwells*, 53, n33, 57, n48 & n49, 60, n59; tombstones at Abingdon Parish Church – see Howe, "Gloucester Beginnings with the Burwells," 44.

the estate that the plantation accelerated the transition his father began. At the center of the plantation remained the manor house. Specific modifications to the house included sealing the original entrance to the cellar kitchen as Nathaniel moved that function to a nearby dependency.³⁶⁸

The construction of a massive, two-story addition extended the building southward, towards Carter Creek. The addition accommodated an expanding family and the need for larger formal entertaining spaces, likely including a dining room, demanded by Virginia's elite families. But the building's façade, its brick fabric, the distinctive triple and double sets of diagonally-shaped chimney stacks (now two of each), and the sash windows along each elevation would persist as the building's defining features. They connected the house visually with the Burwell family of the past and extended their greatest period of prominence through the early eighteenth century. Fully aware of the power of architecture, having experienced it throughout his life in Virginia and his short time in England, Nathaniel paid homage to his father's (and mother's) design by including many of the same elements in his addition, specifically the diagonally set chimney stacks. His own style, though, is visible in the smaller details that suggest an alternative vision for the plantation landscape. He included a modified belt course design above the west elevation entrance into the south wing. The detail was unlike any other change to the building and begs the

³⁶⁸ Wells, "The Planter's Prospect," 1-32; Brown and Harpole, "The Changing Landscape of Fairfield Plantation," 164-171. See also, Thane Harpole and David A. Brown, "Fairfield Plantation: Uncovering a Forgotten Virginia Landmark," *Quarterly Bulletin of the Archeological Society of Virginia* 63 (2007) 3: 121-122; Thane Harpole and David A. Brown, "The Architecture of the Fairfield Manor House: The Convergence of Wealth, Style, and Practicality," *Quarterly Bulletin of the Archeological Society of Virginia* 63 (2007) 3: 136-48.



Digital reconstruction of the Fairfield Manor house during the ownership of
Nathaniel Burwell.
The Fairfield Foundation, White Marsh, Virginia.

question of whether Nathaniel envisioned reorienting the building and surrounding
area, this west doorway perhaps serving as the new formal entrance.³⁶⁹

³⁶⁹ Meredith Mahoney, "Space and Perspective in Four Burwell Gardens" in *Quarterly Bulletin of the Archeological Society of Virginia*, 63 (2007): 153-157; Mark R. Wenger, "The Dining Room in Early Virginia," *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture*, edited by Thomas Carter and Bernard L. Herman (Columbia, 1989): 149-59.

The addition to the south wing accomplished the dual concerns of respecting his father's design, while accommodating the changing needs of a stylish gentry home. The addition of storage, living, and sleeping space allowed for the assignment of new room functions and ensuring greater security and control over access to the building interior, its social spaces, and its power. But Nathaniel's changes must be seen in the context of a period of rapid change in house and plantation design.

Building construction increased in the first two decades of the eighteenth century. The number of masonry buildings in particular increased more than at any prior period in Virginia history. Even before Lewis Burwell's death, Nathaniel's father-in-law, Robert Carter, counted himself among the colony's most ambitious builders. Residing on an already well known plantation with masonry buildings, Carter elevated the architectural endeavors of the entire colony with the construction of his new plantation design including a new manor house, and the support of others, including the Page plantation, Rosewell, just to the southwest of Fairfield along Carter Creek.³⁷⁰

Carter's second eldest daughter, Judith, married Mann Page I and brought considerable wealth and her father's expertise to what many believe to be the most sophisticated manor house ever constructed in colonial North America. Begun in the 1720s after a series of fires consumed the previous manor house and store house in 1721, the manor house and surrounding area at Rosewell plantation is thought to have been in direct competition with the governor's palace as the colony's premier residence. In that role, it symbolized the power of the merchant planter elite in the negotiations of political power with the King of England and his representatives,

³⁷⁰ Ross, *Domestic Brick Architecture*.

specifically the governors of the colony. This competition heightened the role of plantation design as an element of personal identity. It further relegated the role of the enslaved Africans to a cog in the plantation machine, integral to its success, but no more important than the buildings, the fields, or the ships that brought tobacco and other crops to market.³⁷¹

Nathaniel Burwell and Robert Carter continued pouring their profits into the purchase of enslaved Africans and investing heavily in the expansion of their landholdings and agricultural operations. The maintenance of their plantations necessitated these actions and could easily create a perpetual system by which the continued purchase and cultivation of new land was necessary to match expectations for increased profits, or at the very least sustaining profit levels when crop yields dropped and prices remained unpredictable. The desire for more - more land, more slaves, more money, more everything - coincided with increasingly harsh conditions and treatment of enslaved Africans. The elite merchant-planters "were playing at cultivated society...showing off landed wealth supported by trader's wives... acting like manorial lords with black, heathen slaves -- not serfs -- to control, and no white man thought the negro was so unlike himself as not to resent his bondage." The acceptance of this perpetual cycle, quickly associated the system of slavery as an integral component of colonial society. And relative political, social, and economic stability allowed for expansion in the gentry ranks and aspirations by many towards a new standard for the elite.³⁷²

³⁷¹ Camille Wells, *Rosewell: A Documentary History*, manuscript on file, The Rosewell Foundation, Gloucester, 2008.

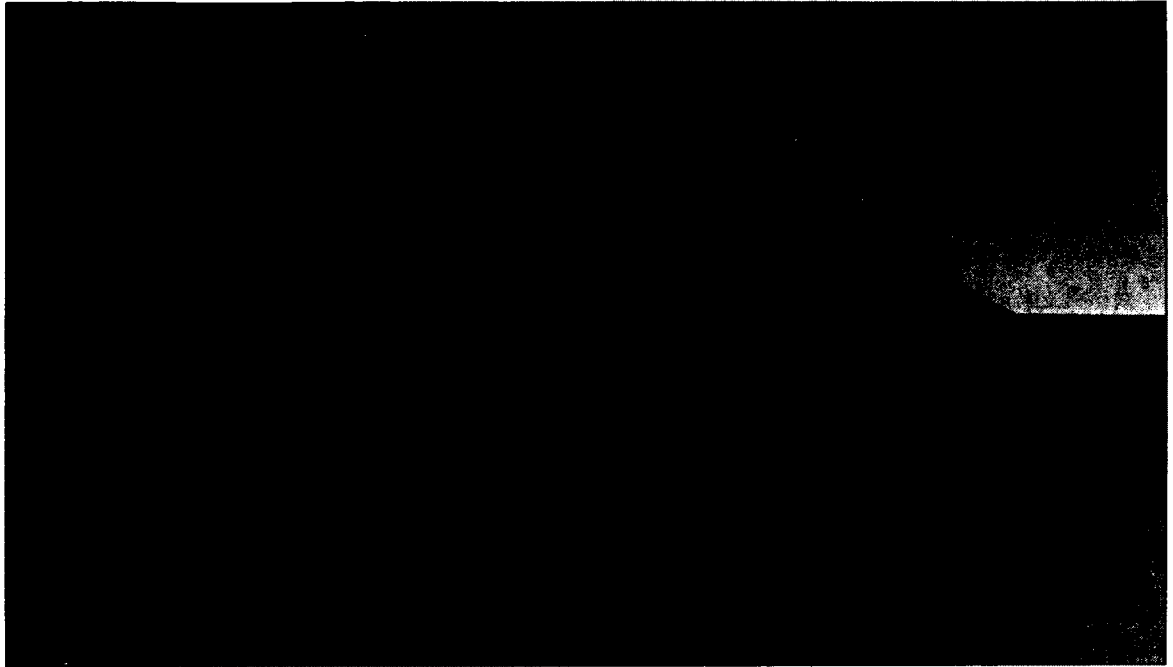
³⁷² Jordan, *White Over Black*, 115.

Carter's position as the colony's most prominent property owner, one of its largest slave holders, and one of the most powerful voices in economic, social, and political affairs, lent great significance and influence to the plantations and buildings he built or inspired, as well as those of his family. Without taking credit away from Burwell descendants who created their own plantation design, demonstrating their own identity, it is likely that every niece, nephew, grandchild and near relative drew inspiration, if only through personal experience, from the plantations at Fairfield and Corotoman, specifically, and from their successful neighbors as well. More of this early eighteenth-century generation visited Europe, examined architectural treatises and prints in popular books of the period, and engaged with some of the same craftsmen (and new ones) working on their plantations and those of their peers. Increased exposure to new buildings, construction techniques, architectural details and landscapes helped develop even greater aspirations towards Englishness. A continued sentiment towards a relatively specific regional combination of building patterns and landscape elements made the perception of a "Virginia" style that much more potent. The emulation of these successful innovations would dominate form and function in the decades to come.

Examples of this are numerous. They include the somewhat thin character of the single pile house, which accommodated for air flow through the one-room-deep layout and fully utilized the limited light which penetrated through still small windows. Another example includes the placement of quarters for enslaved Africans in close proximity to the surrounding fields their occupants worked, but also within sight of the overseer's house, which remained at a slight distance. Over time these

design trends disappeared in favor of more efficient labor practices, advances in agricultural technology, or simply through a shift in style which emanated from distinctly different areas of the globe, but were implemented here regardless of their suitability for this climate. The double-pile house (two rooms deep) was not universally accepted throughout the colony for another generation or two, many craftsmen and owners preferring to build in other forms. Sufficient numbers of these buildings emerged, though, to demonstrate the colony's desire to meet the architectural trends of England during this period and to announce the owner's sophistication and knowledge.

Robert Carter's landscape, at the time he completed his new manor house about 1727, included "...a cluster of twenty buildings... [along a shoreline bordered with] great, gray granite boulders, barged down from the falls of the Rappahannock, [that] repelled the gnawing tides of the river and sheltered the plantation" along with "large apple orchards" and "dairies, smokehouses, kitchens, barns, and cider houses that huddled around a brick store and two old dwellings" and "above them all towered the recently completed two and one half story brick residence of the plantation's master." While the focal point of this description is the manor house, equally important was the designed landscape into which Carter introduced this building. The house symbolizes Carter's experiences as much as his past or his political, social, and economic aspirations. The fact that he built the manor house so late in his life, and that he never rebuilt it after it burned in 1729, requires any perspective on this landscape's meaning to begin with the preceding complex, discussed in Chapter 6, and viewing the final



Reconstructed view of banqueting house at Corotoman, 1726-1727, Lancaster County, Virginia, looking northeast.
Carson, "Banqueting Houses," Plate IV.

building campaign as one of a series of developments that reflect changing attitudes in colonial society.³⁷³

We may never know Carter's justification for building on such an extensive level after years of remaining content within a plantation design as much his brother's as his own. Despite significant excavations in the 1970s, there are only brief glimpses into the history of this dynamic landscape and interpretations are built on relatively small amounts of data concerning building construction, field arrangement, and the population of enslaved Africans who lived and worked at the plantation. According to

³⁷³ Hudgins, *The "King's" Realm*, 3, 5, 7, 71; This brief composite of Corotoman as it appeared to Captain Denton is drawn from evidence elicited from Robert Carter's will and the inventory of his estate; "After the fire of 1729 Carter chose not to rebuild. Past middle age and afflicted by crippling attacks of gout and failing eyesight, he moved instead into a nearby dwelling he had built about 1685 and lived there until his death." "Robert Carter died on August 4, 1732. He was 69, old, infirm, confined to bed for weeks at a time by crippling attacks of gout." no author, *American Weekly Mercury*, 14 September 1732 (Philadelphia), microfilm, University of Missouri, Columbia.

historical archaeologist Carter Hudgins, excavations uncovered only two of the eighteen buildings in Robert Carter's 1732 estate inventory. This included Structure I, the residence of Robert Carter's father, John Carter I, and later his brother, John Carter II. It also included Structure II, built c. 1685-90, a slightly larger and more sophisticated house that Robert Carter built as his primary residence. Structure II may have remained as such throughout his life, even during the brief existence of his larger manor house. Carter, his father and brother built these buildings in close proximity, accompanied by numerous other frame buildings and, perhaps, other masonry buildings at the formal and administrative center of Corotoman plantation. The construction of Robert Carter's "new" Corotoman would forever change the dynamic of the property as it far exceeded the size, scope, and sophistication of any other private residence in the colony. Its use potentially as a party house, the center for entertainment on the plantation, makes its construction all that more interesting. It was the epitome of elite attitudes towards mastery over the landscape and their power over and control of the colony.³⁷⁴

Robert Carter began construction of this grand venue around 1720, completing the project in 1725. This building and his changes to the surrounding landscape represent the culmination of a long life of experience with plantation management, elite entertainment, political influence, and social control. His single-pile building measured 90 feet by 40 feet at its largest, included a 30-inch-thick foundation, and stood a full three stories tall. The colony's most impressive private building, it

³⁷⁴ Carter L. Hudgins, *Summary Report of 1977 Survey at Corotoman with a Proposal for 1979 Season* (Richmond, 1977): 21; A third structure, Structure III, remained untested during the excavations. Probing for brick walls revealed a concentration of rubble measuring 16' x 24' on-line and directly west of Structure II, Robert Carter's house. Carson, "Banqueting Houses," 725-780.

included a front loggia over a raised basement which not only provided guests with a venue to enjoy the surrounding landscape but also put them on a "stage" for view by others who aspired to access this enviable position.³⁷⁵ His efforts are most impressive considering the extent to which he employed and expanded established architectural trends in the colony. He imported carved stonework, included hundreds of thousands of locally-made bricks, some incorporated into the water table, a belt course, and window arches, and purchased numerous windows to illuminate a unique room arrangement which elevated the social functions of the house like few others in the colony. This building pushed the limits of building design and he likely matched these efforts with the surrounding area. Carter's hiring of an English gardener with the specific instructions to "bring the yards around the mansion into closer accord with the architectural rhythms of the mansion" is one of the few pieces of evidence for his investment in this area, the archaeological research limited largely to the manor house rather than the surrounding plantation.³⁷⁶

For every intricate detail uncovered in the archaeological investigations of the house, or every offhand reference to an architectural detail uncovered in his diary or day book, there are countless other elements that remain un-described or undiscovered in the Corotoman landscape. Carter's plantation design included a tree-lined drive that connected his house directly with the church his father helped build, and eventually to the church he built to replace it. Again, as with the design at Fairfield, there is an

³⁷⁵ Carson, "Plantation Housing: Seventeenth Century," 110.

³⁷⁶ There is a curious gap, likely filled by plantations yet to be studied, between Lewis Burwell II's Fairfield and Robert Carter's Corotoman in the 1720s. Carter's landscape could easily represent the next design evolution, at least until other evidence for "party houses" are uncovered archaeologically, but his work dates less to the forefront of experimentation and innovation, but rather to the beginning of a different building boom during the third decade of the century that elevated elite merchant planters' plantations into nearly immortal status. Mooney, *Prodigy Houses of Virginia*; Calder Loth, *The Virginia Landmarks Register* (Charlottesville, 2000); Kornwolf, *Architecture and Town Planning*.

unmistakable link between the religious landscape and the plantation landscapes of the elite, each overlapping the other. The location of Corotoman directly on the Rappahannock River created an advantageous economic and social benefit for its occupants, welcoming merchants and travelers to the plantation while displaying the colony's wealthiest family for all to see. The investment by Carter in the stabilization of the shoreline at the front of his plantation demonstrates both a concern over the power of the natural world to erode that of mankind, but also the power of mankind to manipulate the natural world. His investments far exceeded the manor house centerpiece to include the viewscape in all directions. While there are few of these contemporary design elements which survived, it is clear that Carter's commitment would not have left any confusion as to what these buildings meant or what message he was intending to send (at least to those with whom he "talked"). While this was likely clear before he built his new Corotoman, it was unmistakable afterwards and spoke to his knowledge of the most current trends and highest style.

The early eighteenth-century plantation designs of Fairfield and Corotoman deserve special attention as their owners struggled with and built upon fully formed and successful designs. In the case of the former, a new generation sought to separate themselves and establish their own identity. In the case of the latter, a rare instance of landscape renewal came at a time when Robert Carter witnessed the world changing around him and refused to let his own history define him, or to have himself left behind. Neither person had the beneficial conditions of Lewis Burwell III of Kingsmill, or Carter Burwell (Nathaniel's son and Robert Carter's favorite grandson)

of Carter's Grove. Both developed properties unhindered by past manor houses or complex plantations designs, taking full advantage of their topography and geography.

Lewis Burwell III of Kingsmill spent the majority of his childhood at King's Creek plantation, his father having moved the family residence across the York River after Lewis's half brother, Nathaniel, married Elizabeth Carter. Likely a frequent visitor to Fairfield, Lewis Burwell III would have spent considerable time at both plantations, witnessing the development of the estates as his relatives guided their transitioned into the next generation, including the changes that followed his father's passing in 1710 and his other half brother's (James) modifications to great-uncle Nathaniel Bacon the Elder's estate.

By the time Lewis Burwell III reached majority in 1719 his family could no longer count themselves as exceptional among the elite in massive building campaigns or plantation design. Many others had joined their ranks by that time. The Burwells carried with them a reputation, though, as a socially and politically sophisticated family that preferred formal living that matched the ideals and expectations of elite families. Lewis Burwell III received an education at The College of William and Mary, which his father had invested considerable time and effort developing, his performance as a plantation manager demonstrating both his intelligence and character as well as his developed architectural tastes and political acumen.³⁷⁷

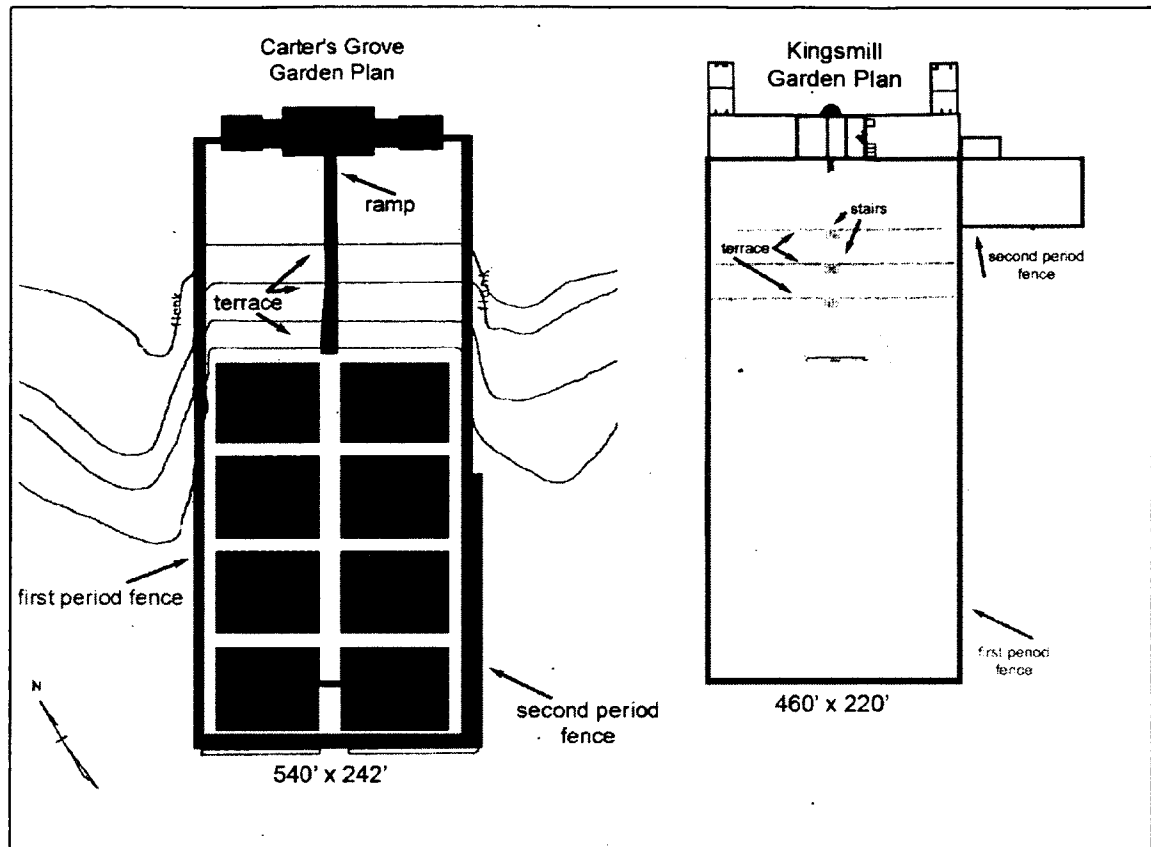
³⁷⁷ Lewis Burwell III did not win over the respect of his half-brothers during his childhood, Nathaniel and James referring to him as "blockhead." This may simply be the anxious critique of older brothers concerned for the welfare of a younger sibling, or, perhaps, judging him as less worthy because of his "half-brother" status; no author, "Letter of Colonel Nathaniel Burwell" in *William and Mary Quarterly*, 1st series (1898-1899): 43-44; for Lewis Burwell III's attendance at the College of William and Mary, see May R. M. Goodwin, "Kingsmill Plantation, James City County, Virginia," manuscript on file, Colonial Williamsburg Research Library, Williamsburg, 1958: xxii.

Lewis Burwell III moved to the lands he inherited from his father, known as Farlows Neck on the James River soon after coming of age. His fellow parishioners elected him to the vestry for Bruton Parish in James City County in 1725. He ascended the political ranks, quickly receiving an appointment as Naval Officer of the Upper District of the James River in 1728, justice of the peace for James City County in 1734, and he was elected to the House of Burgesses for his county in 1736. Construction of his estate may have started as early as this period, although the first documented reference occurs in a letter from his godfather, Stephen Fouace, in 1736. The coincidence of his petition to the Virginia General Assembly in 1735 to doc the entail on his inherited lands in King William County reflects the extent of his investment in plantation design and construction, placing him in a precarious financial position with the need to secure aid through the liquidation of his assets.³⁷⁸

Lewis Burwell III's landscape included a "mansion-house, and other out-houses...gardens, and other considerable improvements" and would eventually include "...a store-house..., coach house, stables, barns and all other necessities." The archaeological evidence of Lewis Burwell III's ambitious design matches well with the documentary evidence. Further, it reveals a substantial investment in masonry buildings, classical design, and extensive landscape modification.³⁷⁹

³⁷⁸ William A.R. Goodwin, *Historical Sketch of Bruton Church* (Petersburg, 1903): 29; Henry Hartwell, James Blair, and Edward Chilton, *The Present State of Virginia and the College* (Charlottesville, 1964): 34-35; see also, Earl Gregg Swem, "Brothers of the Spade" in *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 58 (1948): 181; William Maxwell, ed. *The Virginia Historical Register* (Richmond, 1850), IV: 135; Stephen Fouace to Lewis Burwell, Tucker-Coleman Papers, Colonial Williamsburg Research Library, Williamsburg; H.R. McIlwaine, *Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia, 1727-1734, 1736-1740* (Richmond, 1910): 258; William Waller Hening, *Statutes at Large* (Richmond, 1820), IX: 226.

³⁷⁹ William Waller Hening, *Statutes at Large* (Richmond, 1820), IV: 534-537; Virginia Gazette, Dixon and Nichol森, 17 February 1781: 1.



Manor house and garden plans for Carter's Grove and Kingsmill plantations.
The Fairfield Foundation, White Marsh, Virginia.

Two particular investments match architectural details extant at Fairfield and other early plantation manor houses in Virginia. Archaeologists recovered numerous fragments of fluted and carved sandstone, some exhibiting Baroque carved swags and bunches of flowers, which reflect a combination of bases for garden sculpture and elements of the manor house, such as stairs and window sills. The forecourt incorporated a geometric design "the most unusual which are known in Virginia." Wells describes the area as "bisected by a central walk which extends northward from the house...flanked by auxiliary walks which connect the dependencies to the main house" incorporating an unusual series of "curves and ogee returns which, in an

ornamental fashion, delineate the northern most boundary of the formal building group." An interesting detail which may date as early as the original design are a series of pillars which followed the outer curve of this forecourt. Wells conjectures that these pillars may have been connected by ironwork or wood palings, creating a formal *clairvoyee* "which kept the forecourt free of animals and farm vehicles, and served to emphasize one of several concentric rings of increasing formality."³⁸⁰

Centered within the administrative and formal center of the plantation, the manor house stood a full two stories in height over an English basement with massive flanking gable chimneys. It included large sash windows and entrances on all four sides, the formal ones on the north and south elevations. The forecourt to the north, along with the flanking dependencies, balanced the formal, terraced garden to the south, which created a dramatic descending viewscape towards the James River. Lewis Burwell III's gardens measured 220 by 460 feet at their largest extent, connecting the dependencies and house, incorporating a grass yard and three terraces with a grass ramp and stone steps which led to a 220 foot by 320 foot area of planting beds. The entire complex utilized a series of rectangles as the connecting plan that demonstrated Lewis Burwell III's knowledge of Palladio's instructions and his own "stylistic consciousness and pretensions." The extensive excavations document a significant portion of this formal design, but they did not continue far enough afield to reveal any evidence of a home quarter. Enslaved Africans lived within the heated dependencies and occupied the spaces segmented by generations of fence lines, paths, and work yards, but their living spaces are largely discussed beyond the realm of this

³⁸⁰ Camille Wells, *Kingsmill Plantation: A Cultural Analysis*, M.A. thesis, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, 1976: 64, 65-66, 100.

area. The design is tantalizing in its incorporation of sophisticated arrangements of perspective and control of movement and view, but the discussion of its situation within the larger plantation organization, as with much research on plantations of this period, is frustratingly incomplete.³⁸¹

When Lewis Burwell III died suddenly in early September 1744, he left a magnificent plantation to his eldest son, also named Lewis. This new Burwell family seat lasted into the 1840s and would serve as home to successive generations of Lewis Burwells, associating their name and their ancestor's "Kingsmill" name on the property through to the current day. The family's dominance over this sizeable 1400 acre plantation would rival their neighbor, contemporary, and relative, Carter Burwell, nephew of Lewis Burwell III.³⁸²

Carter Burwell, in contrast to his uncle, grew up at Fairfield plantation. Again, the likelihood of his visiting other family plantations is nearly certain, each playing a role in how his vision of an idealized plantation might look. In parallel to his uncle, he attended the College of William and Mary (1734), held lucrative political appointments, and served in public office at nearly every level. And as Lewis Burwell III of Kingsmill had, he designed his plantation without the impediment of a prior generation's design, turning agricultural fields into a formal and administrative complex along the north shore of the James River.

Carter Burwell began construction of his Carter's Grove estate in 1751.

Despite significant alterations, it stands as one of the few remaining pre-Revolutionary

³⁸¹ William M. Kelso, *A Report on Exploratory Excavations at Carter's Grove 1970-1971* (Richmond, 1972); William M. Kelso, *An Interim Report: Historical Archaeology at Kingsmill: The 1972 Season* (Richmond, 1973); Wells, *Kingsmill Plantation: A Cultural Analysis*, 78.

³⁸² H.R. McIlwaine, *Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia, 1742-1747, 1748-1749* (Richmond, 1909): 78-81.

War Burwell family home in Virginia. The early form incorporated a massive seventy-two by forty-three foot foundation flanked by twin dependencies on the east and west sides. The now familiar double-pile plan of the mid-eighteenth century included a low hipped roof and close window spacing that, according to Wells, imparted a "more horizontal, reposed manner" that differed from others of this period and before. Its differing fenestration patterns, including a five bay north elevation and a seven bay south elevation, connect it with elements of his father's, Nathaniel Burwell, manor house. At Fairfield, the inclusion of a south addition to the south wing created an east elevation with four unevenly spaced bays while the west elevation included a three bay, relatively evenly spaced arrangement with a modified belt course above the entryway. In both circumstances, the window arrangements reflected interior divisions and a desire to accommodate new activities indoors. Carter Burwell's design maintained symmetry, though, implementing the architectural principals better than his father had.³⁸³

The archaeological evidence of Carter Burwell's plantation complex matched in many way his uncles, located several miles to the west. Putting the extant buildings aside for a moment, the most intriguing comparison of the two plantations focuses on their contemporary gardens. A Renaissance rectilinear design, alongside the gardens of Lewis Burwell III, Carter Burwell's garden used the same logic of placing the manor house at the top of a knoll along the north bank of the James River. The garden fence enclosed the corners of the manor house and, at its largest extent, extended 42 feet across the south face of the house and 540 feet towards the James River. The enclosed area was divided into multiple components, including a yard, sunken yard, a

³⁸³ Wells, *Kingsmill Plantation: A Cultural Analysis*, 97.

three-tiered terrace, all connected with a grass ramp and stone steps, and a 150 foot by 242 foot area with formal paths and planting beds. His plan demonstrated through the descending gardens and subsequent outflow of buildings and people who work among the carefully controlled spaces, his dominance over the world he owned. A concept seen as early as their ancestor, Lewis Burwell II, and earlier in the plantation of the Governor, William Berkeley, the further demonstration of this sophisticated knowledge and the impression of control over people and nature is a reflection of the elite merchant-planters' obsession with landscape as a symbol of identity.³⁸⁴

The mid-eighteenth century marked a period of great prominence for the Burwell family, perhaps the pinnacle of their influence in manor house and landscape design. They owned an impressive number of estates in the heart of the colony, extending in a nearly contiguous spread from the shores of the Mobjack Bay in Gloucester County, across Abingdon Parish to the York River, into York County's Hampton Parish, through to James City County's Bruton Parish, over the James River into Isle of Wight County and Burwell's Bay in Upper Parish. Five home plantations covering more than 10,000 acres connected three generations of Burwells; it also connected their enslaved Africans, their ambitions, and their landscapes. Symbolically and literally, an intersection of three of their plantations on the Lower Peninsula is marked by the initials of three Burwells, James Burwell of Kings Creek, Nathaniel Burwell of Carter's Grove, and Lewis Burwell III of Kingsmill, a shared boundary between their properties. Ironically, the least studied of the Burwells from this period,

³⁸⁴ Kelso, *A Report on Exploratory Excavations at Carter's Grove*; Kelso, *An Interim Report: Historical Archaeology at Kingsmill*.

Lewis Burwell I/II, rose to the highest position of any member of the family: acting Governor of Virginia.³⁸⁵

A contemporary of Lewis Burwell III (uncle) and Carter Burwell (brother), Lewis Burwell I/II assumed control of Fairfield Plantation after his grandfather, Robert Carter, died in 1732. Lewis Burwell I/II split his youth between the plantation, his mother's house in Williamsburg, and England, where his grandfather sent him for schooling. He enjoyed his time abroad so much that he angered Carter. He would have preferred to stay there had his grandfather not died, enjoying his life in England and finding the world of the Chesapeake planter, even among the elite, beneath him. Upon his return in 1733 Lieutenant Governor William Gooch noticed that Burwell returned "with a reserved and haughty manner that did not favorably impress his fellow colonists."³⁸⁶

While Lewis did not enjoy an easy transition from England to Virginia, he would later appreciate the position of plantation master and the power it presented.³⁸⁷ His bachelorhood was short lived, marrying his neighbor, Mary Willis, in 1736 and quickly starting a family.³⁸⁸ This marriage brought with it a substantial estate, White

³⁸⁵ Lyon Gardiner Tyler, ed., "York County in the Seventeenth Century" in *Tyler's Quarterly Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, Volumes 1-2 (Richmond, 1920): 235.

³⁸⁶ Lewis Burwell I/II inherited the estate from his father, Nathaniel Burwell, but it remained under his grandfather's control until Lewis reached majority and returned from school in England from 1721 to 1732; Letters as President in PRO. CO. 5/1327; Robert Dinwiddie to Board of Trade, 20 March 1756, PRO. CO. 5/1328, fols. 198-199.

³⁸⁷ In a letter to James Burrough in England on July 8, 1734, Lewis Burwell I/II wrote on the subject of sexual relations between whites and their enslaved Africans "Juba says of Marcia, True, She is fair, O how divinely fair! And I say of the greatest beauty we have True, She is brown, O how divinely brown! Most lovers consider only what is agreeable in the Matrimonial Scene, & hide all that is Wretched. It is commonly affirmed, that Truth well painted will certainly please the imagination; but it is some times convenient not to discover the whole truth, but that part which only is delightfull." William Hamilton Bryson, ed., "A Letter of Lewis Burwell to James Burrough, July 8, 1734," in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 81 (1973), 4: 405-414.

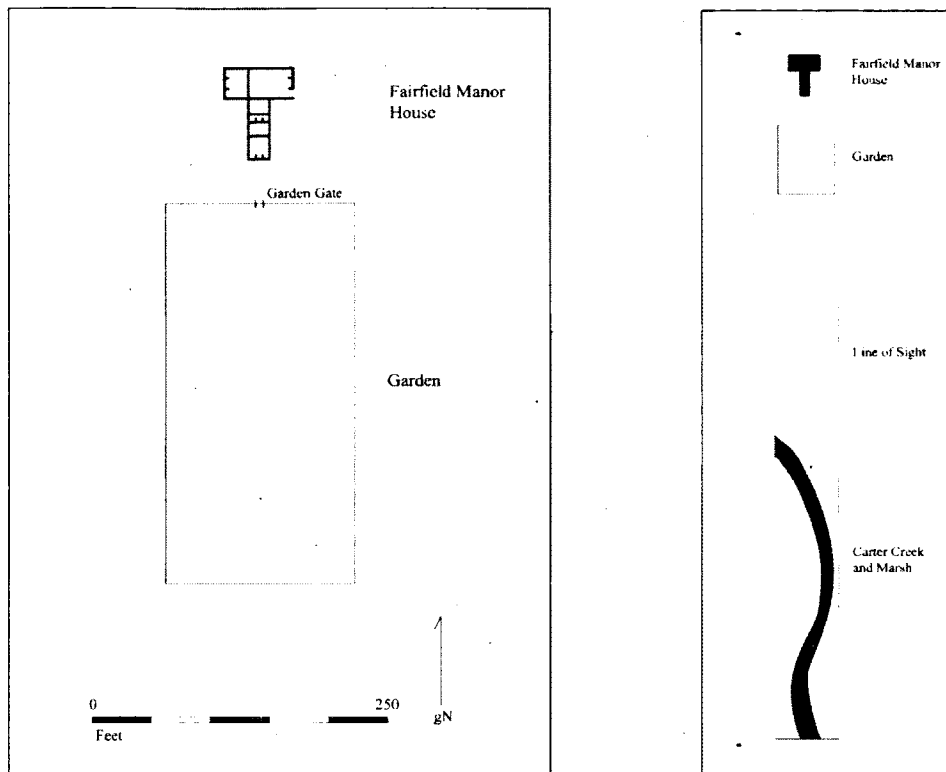
³⁸⁸ William Hamilton Bryson, *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 81 (1973), 4: 406, n4; *Virginia Gazette* (Williamsburg), October 29, 1736; for Mary (Willis) Burwell, see Lyon G. Tyler,

Marsh, that remained with the Burwell family through the early nineteenth century, creating one of eastern Virginia's largest plantations at over 7000 contiguous acres with 138 tithables.³⁸⁹ It brought under his control such substantial resources that he may have considered moving to his wife's family's plantation, likely built more recently and more in line with the style of the mid-eighteenth century, rather than the early eighteenth-century modified manor house and landscape of his father's making. But archaeological evidence has proven that he invested significantly in his family's ancestral home in Virginia.

Lewis Burwell I/II's residency at Fairfield Plantation lasted for 25 years and included hosting the Governor's Council on numerous occasions during the 1750s. During this period he made few changes to his father's house, beyond likely updates to the interior furnishings and general maintenance. His primary investment in the plantation appears to have been the extensive formal garden south of the manor house. Gardens of this period served many purposes and drew on both the stylish advances in Europe and a few generations of local garden traditions/innovations. As seen in the prior discussion of an earlier and a contemporary garden, of Lewis Burwell III and Carter Burwell respectively, this was an impressive space that highlighted humankind's control of nature. At the same time, the movement through and appreciation of these gardens highlighted control of other humans, particularly how they experienced their view as they walked through this space. While an illusion of

"Willis Family," in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 1st ser., V (1897): 172; Maud Potter, *The Willises of Virginia . . .* (Mars Hill, 1964): 65; Byrd Charles and Richard Henry Willis, *A Sketch of the Willis Family of Virginia and their Kindred in Other States* (Richmond, 1898): 16, 123, 124.

³⁸⁹ This included at least two plantations, the 1784 tax roles listing the Lewis Burwell estate in Abingdon Parish with a total of 5 dwellings and "36 other buildings." Census Records of Gloucester Co., VA. See Robert F. Woodson and Isabel B. Woodson, *Virginia Tithables from Burned Record Counties* (Richmond, 1970).



Fairfield manor house and conjectural garden plan (left) and likely viewshed. The Fairfield Foundation, White Marsh, Virginia.

sorts, the idea of power and control that this space communicated, as well as the wealth, knowledge, and sophistication required to implement it, through the proper placement of fences, hedges, or walls, paths, planting beds, sculpture, and plants emphasized uniformity, symmetry, and proportion through use of “exact levels, straight lines, parallels, squares, circles, and other geometrical figures.”³⁹⁰

Gardens in the Chesapeake benefitted from what many considered to be a “natural” setting, surrounded by forests and not-yet-tamed elements that drew great contrast between the controlled and safe environments of the formal garden and the

³⁹⁰ In 1751 the council met at Fairfield on at least two occasions, the locations of the majority of the meetings left unspecified; McIlwaine, *Executive Journals*, Volume V, 346, 347; Mark Leone, *The Archaeology of Liberty in an American Capital: Excavations in Annapolis* (Berkeley, 2004): 64, 68-69; Julia S. Berrall, *The Garden: An Illustrated History* (New York, 1966).

uncontrolled wilds of the surrounding gullies and tree-lined creek beds that often served as borders between properties and the figurative boundaries of the formal design. As garden historians Brinkley and Chappell wrote, "...a natural landscape did not need to be recreated; there were ample reminders of that at every turn...A garden was nature tamed, trimmed, and enclosed within a fence or hedge."³⁹¹

Lewis Burwell I/II's focus on this element of the plantation matched many of his contemporaries' intentions, complementing their homes with a stylish and elaborate formal garden. His were not the first gardens on the property (see Chapter Five) and the effect on his design demonstrated both his flexibility and likely his frustration with inheriting his father's estate, rather than starting anew. Archaeological evidence for his garden is substantial. Lewis Burwell I/II constructed a large, enclosed garden of symmetrical design with substantial garden fence posts set on ten foot centers that enclosed an area measuring 164 feet by at least 328 feet. A gate directly south of the house at the center of the north garden fence line provided direct access between the two landscape elements while windows on the first floor of the manor house limited views of the garden from the building's interior. The sturdy fence line surrounding the garden beds controlled access and created a clear space delineated between those who could access and those who should not gain access to this space. Furthermore, the utility of the fence line, attempting to keep out the vermin and wild animals who might consume the garden's bounty, incorporates a proportional

³⁹¹ M. Kent Brinkley and Gordon W. Chappell, *The Gardens of Colonial Williamsburg* (Williamsburg, 2003): 1.

construction that connects the size and solidity of this element of the landscape with the massive brick manor house.³⁹²

Excavations at Lewis Burwell III's Kingsmill and Carter Burwell's Carter's Grove identified similarly large and elaborate gardens, discussed earlier in this chapter. A third Burwell family garden, Robert "Robin" Carter's garden in Isle of Wight County, is referenced in a 1771 Virginia Gazette advertisement as "handsome...completely laid off, seventy five yards by a hundred and five." Along with the gardens of Fairfield plantation, this group represents the largest comparative sample of any family in the Chesapeake during this period and represents both the importance of these landscape features to the larger plantation design, but also the individual responses to challenges in incorporating topography, geography, and personal style. The added complication of changing or incorporating an older formal garden may have caused further accommodations in Lewis Burwell I/II's designs for Fairfield, acknowledging it was easier to redesign and reconstruct a fashionable garden than to do the same with the manor house.³⁹³

To this end, the gardens at Fairfield can be seen as an expression of Lewis Burwell I/II's struggle to mix the past with the present, remaking his father's (and

³⁹² Comparisons of length-width ratios at other Burwell gardens suggest the garden may extend up to 328 feet in length. Mahoney's research provides an initial comparison of four gardens owned by the Burwells—the Fairfield garden in Gloucester County, Kingsmill and Carter's Grove gardens along the James River near Williamsburg, and Robert "Robin" Carter's garden in Isle of Wight County. Mahoney, "Space and Perspective in Four Burwell Gardens," 153-157.

³⁹³ Kelso, *A Report on Exploratory Excavations at Carter's Grove*; Kelso, *An Interim Report: Historical Archaeology at Kingsmill*; Purdie and Dixon 1771 Virginia Gazette, 15 May 1771, p. 3, c. 1; The dimensions and layouts of the Burwell gardens may hint at the existence of an ideal garden size. Carter's Grove has a 2.2:1 length-width ratio, with Kingsmill and Robin Carter's gardens exhibiting 2.18:1 and 1.4:1 ratios respectively. However, it is possible Robin Carter's garden did not contain a yard or terrace within the enclosure. If the ratios only take into account the path and planting bed modules of gardens, the Carter's Grove ratio is 1.5:1 and the Kingsmill ratio is 1.46:1. These numbers are fairly close to those at Robin Carter's garden and suggest the ideal size for the planting bed module of gardens was based on a 1.45:1 length-width ratio.

grandfather's) landscapes without distancing himself too far from their reputations and the power that accompanied his association with them. Although the late seventeenth-century garden created by Lewis Burwell II, and maintained and possibly expanded by Nathaniel Burwell, remains undiscovered we can understand its early precedent as communicating a sense of order of space, using the fences, paths, and specific arrangements of plants to guide the view, movement, and other senses of those who traveled through this space while demonstrating a knowledge of geometry and a desire to control the natural surroundings. Lewis Burwell I/II did not attempt to build large, masonry dependencies as part of his garden design. Rather, he used smaller, post-in-ground, wood frame buildings as elements which would serve to border or fence the landscape, similar to the early design at Arthur Allen's brick house. These buildings did not play the same role as those at Kingsmill or Carters Grove and they did not need to; they existed at Fairfield prior to Lewis's redesign. Constructed of wood, rather than brick, their physical fabric, not just their likely function as garden support buildings, also communicated a lesser position among the plantation's architectural hierarchy.

The construction and placement of these buildings might be seen as part of that struggle to reconcile new styles with an older plantation. Historical Archaeologist Meredith Mahoney suggests that, "the entire garden probably contained planting beds similar to those in other Burwell and Chesapeake gardens" and "large central walkways likely divided the length of the garden while parallel and intersecting paths created geometric planting beds which in turn contained geometrically inspired plantings." The question of what was planted and how Lewis Burwell I/II further

embellished this design requires additional excavation, but there are some indications that floral borders may have enclosed beds of vegetables, flower knots may have graced other garden beds, and sculpture, seen in the surviving decorative marble urn attributed to Fairfield, elevated the status of this garden to the level of those documented at the Governor's Palace, Westover, Kingsmill, and likely Green Spring plantations (Figure XX).³⁹⁴

The foresight of Lewis Burwell I/II's ancestors provided him with the opportunity to manipulate perspective within and outside the garden similar to his contemporaries. Lewis Burwell III and Carter Burwell both created terraces of diminishing size to accentuate the height and symbolic prominence of their manor house, making them appear more expansive. Their location on rises above the James River made them well-suited for terracing. At Fairfield, Lewis Burwell I/II accomplished the same effect by utilizing a naturally descending topography situated 30 feet above Carter Creek below. Travelers sailing (or rowing) directly up the creek would see the house and gardens rise slowly out of the ground, a design that incorporated the illusion of distance through converging lines of sight to make the garden seem longer. As mentioned previously, the perspective of the garden and the plantation design from the house was limited to the first story. Whether coincidental or through design, the limited views from the house to the gardens would have more closely achieved the ideal viewpoints required by mid-eighteenth-century gardens.³⁹⁵

³⁹⁴ Mahoney, "Space and Perspective in Four Burwell Gardens," 153-157; Barbara Wells Sarudy, *Gardens and Gardening in the Chesapeake: 1700-1805* (Baltimore, 1998): 26; see also Bryan Clark Green, Calder Loth, and William Meade Stith Rasmussen, *Lost Virginia: Vanished Architecture of the Old Dominion* (Charlottesville, 2001).

³⁹⁵ Leone, *The Archaeology of Liberty*; As an interesting side note, Mahoney conjectures that the structures at Rosewell plantation, visible further down the creek, may have been incorporated into Burwell's design, specifically for persons within the garden and house. The buildings may have been

The non-elite undoubtedly received and experienced these views differently, not necessarily as experiences intended to communicate enjoyment and appreciation of the elite and their families. The class immediately beneath the elite merchant-planters might aspire to create these in smaller scale, but the vast majority of the population would not incorporate these landscape elements into their own properties in the same way. Their experience of these spaces might be intimate and physically direct, though.

Elite merchant-planters tasked indentured servants, enslaved laborers, and skilled craftsmen and gardeners with the purpose of building and maintaining these elements. Their participation in the creation of the meanings of these spaces once again created overlapping landscapes of meaning for multiple groups. Their modification of the spaces, their movement through them, and their very presence within them, made these meanings ever more complex. Not only did these people have the opportunity to change the spaces in small but noticeable ways, but they also became a part of the landscape through their labor, making them complicit in the control of nature, but also an element controlled by the plantation owner. The placement of buildings in relation to the garden, as well as exterior paths, roads, and fields, extended the power of the garden beyond its fence line, much like the plantation beyond its legal boundaries and into the properties beyond. The direct, physical association of landscape elements with the garden linked them with the importance of the garden, requiring their matching this element.

used similarly to the placement of a summerhouse or statue at the convergence of two garden paths, which would further emphasize the size of the plantation's landscape. See William Seale, *Paul Buchanan – Stratford Hall: and Other Architectural Studies* (Stratford, 1998).

These gardens, the surrounding plantation, and the people who designed and constructed them changed with each generation. Building on the successes of the past, adapting to changing styles, and responding to the economic and social conditions of their class and context, each landscape is unique and an individual expression of the individuals involved. It is also linked with the landscapes of the preceding generations, particularly the first major expansion into large-scale plantation design which came at the end of the seventeenth century. As the eighteenth century continued, the number of plantations and manor houses increased, the population of enslaved laborers grew and became self-sustaining, and regional agricultural practices stabilized. Reliance on the established social and economic traditions of the colony bred the confidence to create new plantations with complex designs that were less innovation and more emulation, building on what worked within an established realm of what was deemed possible.

Perhaps the region experienced greater numbers of designed plantations, but less variety among them, reflecting a general agreement on how one should build, what one should build, and what this meant. Each plantation design utilized landscape as a controlling element which established a hierarchy using building placement, materials, and topography to set an expected movement through and appreciation for more than just the surrounding environment, but also the people who existed within this environment. It became a symbol of accepted colonial life, rooted in nearly three generations between what were considered appropriate and efficient plantations of an elite merchant-planter class. To change that would require a significant shift in how the region operated and would not be experienced for another generation.

Conclusion:



Wine bottle seals for Lewis Burwell II, Nathaniel Burwell (dated 1715), and Robert "King" Carter, recovered from excavations at Fairfield plantation. The Fairfield Foundation, White Marsh, Virginia.

Lewis Burwell II, his wife Abigail, and, later, his wife Martha, did not enter the world of plantation design unwittingly. It was part of a larger approach to ensuring success in the present and in the future for themselves and their children. Their intent, like many of their contemporaries, could be interpreted as one focused on the mastery of landscape and harnessing of nature to their benefit economically within the parameters established by the colony's social and political hierarchy. Access to land, labor, and markets, both local and international, led to wealth, respect from one's peers, and relative stability in a world of uncertain mortality and often political instability. The design of their brick home, its placement on the plantation in a deliberate fashion, and their incorporating knowledge of fashionable housing and domestic ritual reflected their confidence in themselves, their colony, and their future.

This example associating landscape and identity revolves around Lewis Burwell II and his two wives. Together, they took up the challenge of redefining his parent's landscape and adapting it to a changing social, economic and political

climate. The influx of new wealth brought about by his uncle-in-law's death and the likelihood that Abigail helped plan the "new" Fairfield with her husband, extended this plantation landscape beyond Burwell's own family's legacy. Her death and its affect on the later design stages shifted one meaning for this landscape towards memorial. Despite Lewis's marriage to Martha Lear Cole in 1695 it was Abigail's initials, rather than her successor's, which remained high upon the manor house chimney. The constant reminder, as her "image" looked down upon the surrounding landscape, branded this place with the identity of these two people, extending meaning into a future far longer than the Burwells' ownership or even the physical existence of this building.

A second example associating landscape and identity revolves around the enslaved Africans that Lewis Burwell II and his two wives brought to Fairfield plantation. As the elite merchant planters defined "whiteness" and then contrasted it with everything they aspired to control, the enslaved Africans that worked the tobacco fields, cleared the forests, and helped build the manor house, among many other tasks, defied the racialization of slavery and its dehumanizing trend through the formation of families, the construction of meaning in the items they built, and the maintenance of an ever-existing black landscape. The study of this world is the greatest means towards understanding the lives of Jockey, Jone, and Judy beyond the names and values recorded on a scrap of paper.³⁹⁶

There is value in studying a society seemingly so different from our own. It can tell us so much about ourselves; in many ways, the past continues to affect our

³⁹⁶ Walsh, *From Calabar to Carter's Grove*, 229; Epperson, "'A Separate House for the Christian Slaves,'" 55.

view of the world. Broadly speaking, the concepts underlying the intersection between landscape and identity are timeless and relevant whether studying the past or the present. It allows a level of empathy that transcends time. And there are valuable lessons we can learn from the study of landscape and identity in the past. As people who exist in a landscape, our actions are both responsible for its creation and maintenance, as well as for changes in its meaning. By studying past landscapes and how others used them to define and redefine their identities, we gain insight into our present condition, deepening our understanding of how our interactions with landscape define our own identity.³⁹⁷

Consider what the study of this plantation, Fairfield, can tell us about ourselves, how we consider the intertwined nature of identity and landscape, and its affect on the world around us. The changes to plantation design and function during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries are perhaps the most significant of any period prior to the Civil War and coincide with dramatic changes across the colony. While the plantations of the wealthiest merchant-planters in Virginia represent a relatively tiny portion of the colony's population, their actions had a disproportionately large influence on the natural surroundings and the development of colonial society in Virginia. The designed landscape reflected the struggle between the co-dependent strains of agricultural transition and consumer revolution. More so, successive owners reorganized their plantations to continue profiting from these agricultural endeavors and to compete with their peers through the display of their wealth and knowledge.

³⁹⁷ Harris, "The Postmodernization of Landscape," 434-443.

Enslaved Africans played an integral part in these changes, affected by both the reorganization of the landscape and their changing roles within the plantation social hierarchy. The developing "enslaved" landscape restructured almost every aspect of their lives. The black landscape enslaved Africans created, a product of their own life experiences and the culture of their origins in Africa, existed both within and beyond the white landscape. It provided a degree of escape, opportunities for independence, power, and control, and reflected an alternative world that remained largely unacknowledged by their owners, changing the meaning of these buildings and spaces and replacing them with something different.

These overlapping landscapes changed with each person; each individual projected an identity onto the physical fabric of the world. The massive brick manor house figured prominently within all of these landscapes, connected to any person's involvement in its design, construction, use, and maintenance. The building survives as an archaeological site, as a name on a map, and as the subject of six late nineteenth-century photographs. An early twenty-first-century perspective (this author's) defines the landscape as a reflection of conflicting ideals: the heights of architectural aspirations and human accomplishment contrasted with the dehumanizing practice of slavery and the pursuit of profits at nearly any cost. Still further, the landscape changes once again as a classroom for studying the past, for understanding the many layers of personal histories each person left in the broken pottery and dark soil stains in the ground.

The Burwells' plantation no longer exists above ground. Lewis Burwell II's house became Nathaniel's with the extension of the south wing, became Lewis

Burwell I/II's with construction of the formal garden, transitioned out of the family soon after the Revolution, lost its west wing by 1839, and burned to the ground in 1897. The descendants of the enslaved Africans who built the plantation likely took the remaining bricks and built their own homes on land their ancestors worked throughout the colonial and antebellum periods. The constituent parts were more valuable than the whole. A community of African Americans, the first generation of freedom, worked on, rented, or owned much of the plantation at the turn of the twentieth century, developing still other landscapes overtop of what was once Virginia's most prominent statement of elite merchant-planter wealth and sophistication.³⁹⁸ And yet the house's presence persisted through those six photographs and the architects and historians who study them – a silent testament to the once proud family of Fairfield Burwells and the people who lived, worked, and died on the plantation.

The manor house remains an important symbol, but a complicated one. It symbolizes the aspirations and struggles of the plantation, its owners, and the enslaved workforce while at the same time distracting us from understanding the larger plantation, privileging a single element of a complex system, ever changing and extending across thousands of acres and encompassing the full range of diversity in coastal Virginia. It is the acknowledged focal point, today as in the past, but simply one piece of a larger puzzle. Understanding the meaning of this building, how it was designed, built, used, and remembered, is essential to understanding the larger

³⁹⁸ The latter period of the plantation's history is the subject of a short pamphlet written by the staff of the Fairfield Foundation entitled *Fairfield Plantation and the Emergence of an African-American Community*, printed by the Fairfield Foundation in 2009 through a generous grant from the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities.

plantation landscape, but it is only the first step towards the greater goal of understanding how life on a colonial plantation influenced how we look at the past, how we interact in the present, and how we can better our future.

Few visited the plantation site after the fire. It slipped into obscurity in contrast to other Virginia manor houses, like nearby Rosewell plantation, that became the focal points for historic preservation and adulation movements of the early twentieth century. The memory of Fairfield persisted for a select few, namely Burwell descendants and architectural historians, until the late twentieth century. Few in Gloucester County remembered where it was, much less the people who lived there and how they contributed to the history of colonial Virginia. Historians seldom mentioned the hundreds of enslaved Africans and others who lived and died there, a frequent omission in the early architectural studies and genealogical articles that persists for many plantations to this day. The image of the massive brick house persisted, though, its early construction, strange form, and magnificent diagonally-set chimney stacks standing out.

As a sole example of the plantations of late seventeenth-century Virginia, the study of Fairfield plantation is of limited benefit. Understanding it within the context of other earlier, contemporary, and later plantations, though, not only illuminates its exceptional qualities, but extends our understanding of plantation design, landscape, and identity throughout this period. Whether matching two architectural details from disparate periods, or finding a link between elite merchant planters and their enslaved Africans, comparisons are essential to demonstrating not the consistency of these events, but their meaning. The connections across space and time highlight the

complex differences that in how these objects, events, and landscapes communicated multiple messages - those diagonally-set chimney stacks, for instance, at one time respectful and connected with the past, but innovative and expressive of their own individual identity when incorporated in different combinations or different locations.

The image of the colonial tobacco plantation continues to affect the identity of southeastern Virginia. The commonly held perception of these dynamic environments remains trapped on a specific day, coinciding with a poetic and flowery description or tied to an historic event of great significance. Our historic house museums and living history sites cannot help themselves in perpetuating this feeling and, in most cases, revel in their ability to stop time despite the uniformly acknowledged fact that plantation landscapes, as with any landscape, changed constantly. While effective in translating these moments to a public hungry for a tangible connection with the past, these largely false and misleading representations prevent a deeper understanding of our complex shared heritage. The region's continued sub-urbanization and the rapid loss of farmland, confronts longstanding residents with the challenge of redefining themselves without the rural, agricultural backdrop that connected them with their selectively glorified colonial past. Each generation grapples with how to situate themselves within a disturbing picture of continued racial injustice, economic disparity, and reliance on the control of landscape.

Studying the past is relevant to understanding our own actions and how we define ourselves within our world. The key is not necessarily discovering truths about the past, uncovering facts - however they can be defined, or connecting the dots of fence lines, building foundations, and road beds. The key is learning more about

ourselves, connecting with the people in the past, better understanding their lives, and changing our own. Understanding that our knowledge of the past is fluid, that our conclusions might change, and that we need to know more - always more - should embolden all of us. Our efforts are best placed on the process of understanding, ascending this mountain of questions rather than reaching its summit. Ultimately, our understanding of these landscapes and the people behind and within them is a reflection of our own interests in the past, a reflection of our present.

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